THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

ST. AUGUSTINE

THE RETRACTATIONS

Translated by Sister M. Inez Bogan, R.S.M.

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A NEW TRANSLATION

VOLUME 60

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To

DR. ROY J. DEFERRARI

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BOOK TWO

INTRODUCTION

As St. Augustine was approaching the end of his long and active life, he was much concerned about his literary production—the books and letters he had dictated, the sermons he had preached. Being a very sensitive person and realizing that his life had passed through many vicissitudes, some of which plagued him almost to the end, he was deeply solicitous about anything in his writings that was not strictly orthodox, or, as he himself put it in a letter of the year 427/428, "anything that offends me or might offend others."[1] Thus, he set to making a systematic review of all of his works and, where necessary, correcting them. In carrying out this resolve, even incompletely—the two books of *Retractations* actually realized were finished in 427[2]—he produced a document that in structure, content, and animating spirit is hardly to be matched in the literature not of Latin only but of any language.

For each of the ninety-three works that Augustine deals with, his presentation is essentially uniform. Following the title formally stated—e.g., "Two Books, to Simplician"—come a brief account of the genesis of the work along with anything that needed to be said about the fate of its text, an exposition of its plan and organization (this when length or complexity required it), and a statement of its purpose. In some instances, Augustine then passed directly to the invariable final element,[3] dear to librarians and bibliographers,

1 *Letter* 224.2, to Bishop Quodvultdeus (FC 32.117-119). The essential design of the *Retractations* goes back to the year 412; see *infra* n. 1 on the Prologue.
2 The letter of 427/428 just quoted refers to the two books as finished.
3 The paragraph added to chapter 1.5 supplies an understandable exception.

the setting out of the opening words of the work. Typically, however, this presentation of the *incipit* is preceded by what can be a relatively lengthy component, the *retractatio* proper —Augustine's coming to grips with those passages in the work that he had found to require his further explanation, his defense or repudiation, the element that caused de Ghellinck to refer to the *Retractations* as Augustine's "examination of conscience."[4] While, in general, there is greater play for his self-criticism in the earlier works, including those that preceded his baptism,[5] Augustine, as he grew older, continued to be sensitive and circumspect as to his orthodoxy. His individual criticisms, few or many, whether centered on matters grave or slight—and some modern readers of the *Retractations* are surprised to find that Augustine made so few changes that may be regarded as really significant—all these throw light on traits of Augustine's character and personality, such as his delicate sense of humor and a constant eagerness to improve.

Needless to say, Augustine's own account of how each of the works came to be written and for what purpose, has been of fundamental importance for all students of his life and thought. It was with a clear insight that Erasmus, in arranging his edition of Augustine's collected works (1529), placed the *Retractations* where it has since remained in successive editings of the *opera omnia*—at the very first, the *Confessions* taking second place.[6] Had Augustine done no more than

4 J. de Ghellinck, *Patristique et moyen âge* III (Gembloux 1948) 345. With the fine appreciation that precedes (pp. 341-345) may helpfully be read G. Misch, *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity* II (London 1950) 681-689.

5 Bk. I, embracing 27 books written by Augustine (in the decade preceding his episcopal consecration, 386 A.D.), occupies 45 columns in Migne's PL, while Bk. II, embracing the next 67 works, occupies 27. What chiefly makes the difference in the average length of chapters is the greater or shorter extent of the *retractatio* proper.

6 In the foregoing collected edition, the first, that of J. Amerbach (Basel 1505ff.), the *Retractations* were placed in vol. 8, curiously enough, directly after the last work reviewed in them by Augustine, *On Admonition and Grace.*

simply list the ninety-three works and supply the opening words of each, he would have furnished early bibliographers and literary historians with an invaluable tool, the means of determining what was genuinely Augustinian and what would, in time, settle down as spurious in the Appendix. How badly a true work of Augustine's could fare when, for one reason or another, its author failed to include it in the *Retractations* is shown by the fate of the *De fide rerum quae non videntur,* for example, or the *De utilitate ieiunii.*[7]

At the end of the Prologue to the *Retractations,* Augustine tells us in effect that the order in which he will deal with the ninety-three works will, so far as possible, be that in which the works were composed. Here, too, in supplying this authoritative guide to the sequence of his writings, Augustine put students of his life and works deeply in his debt. True, his chronological ordering does not satisfy in all cases. When dealing with a work that took a long time to compose or, begun at one period, was resumed later, Augustine "does not always make it clear whether he is referring to the time when he began the work in question or to the time when he completed it,"[8] and there is the further complication that Augustine had more than one *magnum opus* in hand at one time. Even so, the two books of *Retractations* have stood firm as the fundamental basis in fixing the succession of Augustine's works.[9]

In the Prologue to the *Retractations,* we are promised a review of Augustine's entire production—his *opuscula* (the depreciatory diminutive is characteristic), all three classes of them: his "books" proper *(libri),* his letters, and his sermons

7 See the remarks contained in recent editions of Sr. M. Francis McDonald, O.P., and Brother Dominic S. Ruegg, F.S.C.: Catholic University of America *Patristic Studies* 84 p. 33; 85 p. 17 respectively.
8 Hugh Pope, *Saint Augustine of Hippo* (New York 1937) 366.
9 The now standard general work on the chronology of Augustine's works, that of S. M. Zarb (Rome 1934), declares itself in its title as grounded in the *Retractations (secundum ordinem Retractationum digesta).*

(tractatus).[10] The work ends, however, with a paragraph that tells us explicitly that the project had failed of completion. Ninety-three works, comprising two hundred thirty-two *libri*, he had indeed dealt with, but at the urging of his community the work was being published just as it then stood, with no account taken, naturally, of books that Augustine might or might not in the future compose, and not even a start made on two entire classes of his literary production, the letters and the sermons.

Augustine continued to compose after he put an end to the *Retractations;* the yield of his last three or four years, whether in works completed or left incomplete, is reviewed below in the notes on the last few chapters. Certain manuscripts of the *Retractations* dutifully account for a good many of these in a scribe's or editor's addition.[11] Little in Augustine's earlier "book" production is passed over in the *Retractations;* certain works noted by some as being neglected would possibly have been classed by Augustine as letters or sermons. A work from Augustine's years of teaching in Carthage, the *De pulchro et apto,* mentioned in the *Confessions* as comprising either two or three books—Augustine himself was not sure—had even then long since vanished.[12] Still, the neglect of any mention of it in the *Retractations* is noteworthy.

10 It has been shown that Augustine's library showed a division of his writings into these three classes. See B. Altaner, "St. Augustine's Preservation of His Own Writings," *Theological Studies* 9 (1948) 600-603. The meaning of *tractatus* in this context as signifying sermons is apparent if one compares this sentence with the sentence that terminates the *Retractations* as an addition to 2.93. With *libri* and *epistulae* used identically in the two sentences, it follows that the *tractatus* are to be identified with the *sermones ad populum.* In *Letter* 224.2, Augustine appears to combine the two expressions: *tractatus populares quos Graeci homilias vocant* (the translation in FC 32.118, "the *popular treatises* which the Greeks call homilies," may not be immediately intelligible to the general reader). On the various Latin words for "preaching," see Christine Mohrmann, "Praedicare—Tractare—Sermo," *La Maison-Dieu* 39 (1954) 97-107; reprinted in her *Études sur le latin des chrétiens* II (Rome 1961) 63-72.

11 The note is reported on p. 205 of Knöll's edition (see. n. 23 *infra*), his oldest source a Würzburg manuscript of the ninth century.

12 *Confessions* 4.13.20, 4.14.21, 4.15.27 (FC 21.91, 91, 96).—On the noninclusion of the *De pulchro et apto* in the *Retractations,* see B. Altaner, in *Theological Studies* 9 (1948) 601.

As for the letters and sermons, the *Retractations* do not altogether ignore them. Certain works that we now read as letters are dealt with there as *libri*,[13] and in one case what was a kind of sermon is reported as having been reworked into a *liber* and published as *One Book on Faith and the Creed*.[14] How Augustine would have gone about encompassing, in additional books of the *Retractations*, the full body of his letters and sermons can only be imagined. When the two books had dealt with only ninety-three works, Augustine would have had now at least 276 letters to reckon with and, it may safely be conjectured, not less than 1000 individual sermons.[15] Some of the sermons—notably the three unified series on the Psalms, St. John's Gospel, and St. John's first letter[16]—could have been handled in groups, as occasioned by a single set of circumstances, but still the demand for narrative and exposition would have been enormous. We must consider, too, that his sermons, preached *ex tempore* and put into writing initially by the stenographers *(notarii)* present and, doubtless, in general devoid of the preacher's revision, might well have carried stenographic errors or, at least, passages which on

13 The following "libri" are found in the correspondence *(Epistulae)* of St. Augustine: (1) *Two Books in Answer to the Inquiries of Januarius (Retr.* 2.46): *Letters* 54 and 55; (2) *An Explanation of Six Questions against the Pagans (Retr.* 2.57): *Letter* 102; (3) *One Book on Grace in the New Testament, to Honoratus (Retr.* 2.62): *Letter* 140; (4) *One Book on the Vision of God (Retr.* 2.67): *Letter* 147; (5) *Two Books to the Priest Jerome: One on the Origin of the Soul and the Second on a Passage from James (Retr.* 2.71): *Letters* 166 and 167; (6) *One Book on the Coercion of the Donatists (Retr.* 2.74): *Letter* 185; (7) *One Book to Dardanus on the Presence of God (Retr.* 2.75): *Letter* 187.—For Augustine's own criteria for the distinction, *liber: epistula*, see Altaner, in *Theological Studies* 9.601.

14 See *Retractations* 1.16 and NOTE thereon.

15 Nearly twenty years ago—the total has slightly increased since—Dom Cyrille Lambot, O.S.B., estimated the number of extant genuine sermons of Augustine at around 500 (his edition of *Sermones selecti duodeviginti* [Utrecht-Brussels 1950] 5), a number that does not include the collected sermons (not all actually preached) mentioned in the following note. Father Pope's estimate of a thousand and more extant sermons "of one sort or another" is accurate enough *(op. cit.* 179; see also 191-193). Lambot *(ibid.)* states that only 279 sermons are recorded by Possidius in his *Indiculum* (for which see *infra*, n. 17).

16 The *Enarrationes in psalmos* and the two series of *Tractatus* on St. John, on the Gospel and the first Letter respectively.

being read by their author might have seemed unclear or inadequate. Here would have been a demand for *retractatio* quite distinct from any felt by Augustine in the case of his carefully dictated *libri* and letters.

As is the case of most of Augustine's work, there is evidence that the *Retractations* have had constant readers and students from an early date. A younger contemporary, Possidius, Bishop of Calama, refers to Augustine's review of his writings.[17] Our oldest manuscript, French work now at Leningrad, dates from the end of the eighth century;[18] later copies are numerous. In addition to copies presenting the entire text, individual chapters are frequently found transcribed at the head of the works they refer to, a practice carried on into the printed editions of the Latin text and also into those of vernacular translations. Copies aside, there is also the evidence of works imitating Augustine or inspired by or derived from the *Retractations*. Three examples from three different periods must suffice. In Northumbria, in the early eighth century, St. Bede the Venerable, after having published his commentary on the *Acts of the Apostles*, issued a *Retractatio* in which he adduces St. Augustine's example for his procedure. Incidentally, the same Bede concludes his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* with an enumeration of his own writings. In the fourteenth century, James of Voragine, O.P., the compiler of the *Golden Legend*—such at least is the ascription in all known copies—bases closely on the *Retractations* a treatise on the works of St. Augustine.[19] And, in our own day, the

17 In his *Life* of St. Augustine chap. 28 (trans. FC 15.108). Possidius's listing *(Indiculum)* of Augustine's writings (PL 46.5-22) is a valuable supplement to the *Retractations* considered simply as a bibliographical record. It has been shown to reflect the contents of Augustine's own library at Hippo.

18 See the latest description, that of E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini antiquiores* 11 (Oxford) No. 1620 (the present-day call-number of the manuscript in the Leningrad Public Library is Q. v. I. 17).

19 This *Tractatus de libris a beato Augustino episcopo editis* was printed at Cologne about 1482. This printing and the half-dozen known manuscripts form the basis of a new edition constructed by Sr. M. John Aloyse McCormick as part of her Catholic University of America doctoral dissertation (1964): see *Dissertation Abstracts* 25 (1964/65) 4132.

author of *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* cited Augustine's example and used his title *(Retractatio)* in publishing an extension of his basic study.[20]

The *Retractations* first appeared in print as a separate book —a rare Milanese quarto of 1486.[21] Taken up into the first comprehensive edition of Augustine's works, that of J. Amerbach of the years just before and just after 1500,[22] the work has passed down through a course of re-editions and reprints familiar to Augustinian scholarship. In 1902, appeared the latest critical edition, that of Pius Knöll,[23] the edition on which the present translation is based. The various editions of the text, in the original or as translated, show disagreement in chapter enumeration, some editors confining chapter 5 to Augustine's account of the *De immortalitate animae* and assigning number 6 to the paragraph that follows on Augustine's treatises on the liberal arts, others, Knöll among them, combining the two elements into a composite chapter 5. Again, some editors maintain a unit chapter enumeration throughout, while others start a fresh enumeration with the first chapter of Book II. The subjoined table will provide the necessary correspondence among variant reference forms. In the notes to the present translation, the Knöll form of reference, shown in the running titles of his edition, has been used, with book indication given even when the chapter-number alone would have sufficed.

20 Marrou quotes from the opening sentence of Augustine's Prologue on p. 624 of the *Retractatio* (Paris 1949); the work itself was published in Paris 1938.

21 The work of the printer Antonius Zarotus: *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* 2917.

22 See de Ghellinck, *Patristique et moyen âge* III 371-7.

23 CSEL 36. The superiority of Knöll's text over that of the Maurists (Benedictines) has been confirmed by E. Dekkers, *Clavis patrum Latinorum* (Sacris erudiri 32 [1961]) p. 67. G. Bardy, *Les révisions* 254, had regarded it as inferior, a view supported by A. Jülicher's review of Knöll's edition, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 28 (1903) 51-53 (similar reservations in von Funk's review in *Theologische Quartalschrift* 85 [1903] 607). Certain of the opinions of Jülicher and von Funk on special points will be noted *ad loc.*, and attention has been called to any departures of the present translator from the Knöll text.

PL	*Knöll*	*Bardy*
1.1	1.1	1.1
1.2	1.2	1.2
1.3	1.3	1.3
1.4	1.4	1.4
1.5 }	1.5	{ 1.5
1.6 }		{ 1.[6]
1.7	1.6	1.7 (6)
↓	↓	↓
1.27	1.26	1.27 (26)
2.1	2.27	2.1 (28)
↓	↓	↓
2.67	2.93	2.67 (94)

It could be discovered that a fair number of the chapters of the *Retractations* have appeared at various times in English translation at the head of the separate works of Augustine with which they deal. No assembly, however, of such excerpts would constitute a complete coverage of the *Retractations,* partly because not all English translations are thus equipped and partly because some of the works Augustine reviews in the *Retractations* have long been lost.[24] It was evident that a full uniform English translation was needed. The present one is the first to supply that need. The notes that follow each of the chapters are an attempt to relate Augustine's works one with another more extensively than he has done, to charac-

24 E.g., those treated in *Retractations* 1.20 and 31.

terize the treatment given each by their author, and to bring into play some of the more accessible modern literature.

In the rendering of Augustine's Biblical quotations into English use has been made wherever possible of the version published under the patronage of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. When the Confraternity rendering is based on texts that do not correspond with Augustine's Latin, the necessary adaptations have been made.

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* The following abbreviations have been used:

ACW	*Ancient Christian Writers*
CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
DCB	*Dictionary of Christian Biography*
DHEG	*Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*
FC	*The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*
LCC	*The Library of Christian Classics*
NPN	*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*
PL	J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina* [=*Patrologia Latina*]

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TWO BOOKS OF RETRACTATIONS

(Retractationum libri duo)

PROLOGUE

For a long time I have been thinking about and planning to do something which I, with God's assistance, am now undertaking because I do not think it should be postponed: with a kind of judicial severity, I am reviewing my works—books, letters, and sermons[1]—and, as it were, with the pen of a censor, I am indicating what dissatisfies me. For, truly, only an ignorant man will have the hardihood to criticize me for criticizing my own errors. But if he maintains that I should not have said those things which, indeed, dissatisfied me later, he speaks the truth and concurs with me. In fact, he and I are critics of the same thing, for I should not have criticized such things if it had been right to say them.

(2) But let each one, as he chooses, accept what I am doing. In this case, however, I had to consider also the pronouncement of the Apostle when he says: "If we judged ourselves, we should not be judged by the Lord."[2] The following words of Scripture, too, terrify me very much: "In a multi-

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1 In a letter to Marcellinus, Augustine for the first time mentions his plan to make a critical survey of all his works (cf. *Letter* 143, 412 A.D.). He carried out this intention by writing the *Retractations*, a work he did not complete. In it, he reviewed most of his treatises but not his *Letters* or *Sermons*, except those he lists among his "books." In two of the last works of his life, namely, *On the Predestination of the Saints* (*De praedestinatione sanctorum* 3.7) and *On the Gift of Perseverance* (*De dono perseverantiae* 21.55), he referred to this review. Cf. further, *Letter* 224.

2 Cf. I Cor. 11.31. On the norms followed in rendering the Scriptural texts quoted in the *Retractations*, see *supra*, p. xxi. For the versions of Holy Scripture used by St. Augustine and for his use and interpretation of the Scriptures, see O. J.-B. Du Roy, in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 1.1054. Cf. further C. H. Milne, *A Reconstruction of the Old Latin Text or Texts Used by Saint Augustine* (Cambridge 1926); Du Bruyne, D., O.S.B., "Saint Augustin, réviseur de la Bible," *Miscellanea Agostiniana* II (Rome 1931) 521-606.

tude of words, you shall not avoid sin,"[3] not because I have written a great deal, or even because many things which I did not dictate, but which I said, were put into writing—for when necessary things are said, God forbid that this be considered wordiness, no matter how prolix or loquacious it may be[4]—but I fear this pronouncement of Holy Scripture because, indeed, without a doubt, many things can be collected from my numerous disputations which, if not false, yet may certainly seem or even be proved unnecessary. In truth, which one of Christ's own faithful has He not terrified when He says: "Of every idle word men speak, they shall give account on the day of judgment"?[5] Wherefore His Apostle James also says: "Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak";[6] and in another place: "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that you will receive a greater judgment. For in many things we all offend. If anyone does not offend in word, he is a perfect man."[7] I do not claim this perfection for myself even now when I am old, and even less when, in early manhood, I had begun to write or to speak to the people, and so much authority was attributed to me that, whenever it was necessary for someone to speak to the people and I was present, I was seldom allowed to be silent and to listen to others and to be "swift to hear but slow to speak."[8] Hence, it remains for me to judge myself before the sole Teacher whose judgment of my offenses I desire to avoid. I think that many teachers arise when there are different and mutually opposed opinions. But when all utter the same words and speak the truth, they do not depart from the teaching of the one true Teacher. They give offense, however, not when they repeat His words at length, but when they add

3 Cf. Prov. 10.19, according to the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX); *Sermon* 56.4.
4 Cf. *In Answer to Cresconius, a Grammarian of the Donatist Party* 1.1.2; *Retr.* 2.52.
5 Cf. Matt. 12.36.
6 Cf. James 1.19.
7 Cf. *ibid.* 3.1-2.
8 Cf. *ibid.* 1.19.

their own; for, in this way, they fall from loquacity into falsehood.

(3) I have decided, moreover, to write this work that I might put it into the hands of men from whom I cannot recall for correction the writings I have already published. Certainly, I will not pass over the things I wrote while still a catechumen—although I had given up the earthly prospects which I used to cherish, but was still puffed up with the usages of secular literature—because these works, too, have become known to copyists and readers and many continue to be read with profit if some errors are overlooked, or if not overlooked, yet are not granted acceptance. Let those, therefore, who are going to read this book not imitate me when I err, but rather when I progress toward the better. For, perhaps, one who reads my works in the order in which they were written will find out how I progressed while writing. In order that this be possible, I shall take care, insofar as I can in this work, to acquaint him with this order.[9]

9 Cf. *Letter* 143 (trans. by Sister M. Wilfrid Parsons, FC 20.150). All English versions of the *Letters* of St. Augustine quoted in this volume are Sister M. Wilfrid's translations, as found in FC 12, 18, 20, 30, 32. Almost all other translations of St. Augustine's works are from the same series unless otherwise specified. In some instances, they are those of the present translator. Augustine is the author of all works cited or quoted when the name of the writer is not indicated.

BOOK ONE

Chapter 1

THREE BOOKS ON THE ACADEMICS[1]

(De Academicis libri tres)

(1) When, therefore, I had given up the vanities of this world, those I had acquired or those I wished to acquire, and had turned to the tranquility of Christian life,[2] before my baptism I wrote, first of all, against the Academics or about the Academics, so that, with the most forceful reasons possible, I might remove from my mind—because they were disturbing me—their arguments which in many men instill a despair of finding truth[3] and prevent a wise man from giving assent to anything or approving anything at all as clear and certain,[4] since to them everything seems obscure and uncertain. With the help and mercy of the Lord, this has been accomplished.

(2) But I regret that, in these three books of mine, I men-

1 The Latin titles of the works of Augustine reviewed by him in his *Retractations* are, in the present volume, the same as those in CSEL 36, which are repeated here together with an English translation. A comparison of these Latin titles with those found in PL and in CSEL shows that, at times, Augustine abbreviated; he may have written them from memory. For a list of the works of Augustine as they are entitled in PL and CSEL, see: (1) H. I. Marrou, *St. Augustine and His Influence through the Ages*, trans. by Patrick Hepburne-Scott 183-186; (2) V. J. Bourke, *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom*, Appendix I, 303-307; (3) P. de Labriolle (trans. H. Wilson), *History and Literature of Christianity*, Table VIII; (4) H. Pope, *St. Augustine of Hippo* 333-354.

2 Cf. *Confessions* 9.1.1; 9.4.7.

3 Cf. Cicero, *Academics* 2.9.28; 2.20.66; 2.21.68; 2.24.76.

4 Cf. *ibid.* 2.18.59; 2.21.67; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 11.5.6.

tion fortune so often,[5] although I did not intend that any goddess be understood by this term, but a fortuitous outcome of events in good and evil circumstances, either in our bodies or extraneous to them. It is from this that we have those words which no religious scruple forbids us to use: *perchance, perhaps, peradventure, possibly, haply*[5a]; but all of these should be applied to divine Providence. Furthermore, at the time, I was not silent on this point for I said, "And indeed, perhaps what is commonly referred to as fortune is governed by a certain hidden order, and in events, we do not term anything 'chance' unless its reason and cause are unknown."[6] Certainly, I said this, but, nevertheless, I regret that I spoke about fortune in this way since I realize that men have a very bad habit of saying, "Fortune willed this" when they should say, "God willed this."

Moreover, either I should have entirely omitted two expressions I used in a certain place: "*Because of our deserts* or *because of the exigency of nature,* it is so appointed that the port of philosophy at no time permits the divine spirit[7] to enter while it clings to mortal things,"[8] and so forth, for the meaning could be complete without those expressions; or it would have sufficed to say, "because of our deserts," since it is true that misery was inherited from Adam, and not to add, "because of the exigency of nature," for the dire exigency of our nature originated as a punishment for the first sin.

Again, to the statement I made there: "Whatever is discerned by mortal eyes, whatever any sense contacts, is not to be fostered at all and should be entirely contemned,"[9] I should have added words so that it would read: "Whatever a

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5 Cf. *On the Academics (De Academicis)* 1.1.1; 1.9.25; 2.1.1; 2.3.9; 3.2.2; 3.2.4.

5a Augustine makes his point by citing a series of adverbs from *for-*, the stem of *fortuna: forte, forsan, forsitan, fortasse, fortuito.*

6 Cf. *ibid.* 1.1.1.

7 On the meaning of *divinum spiritum,* cf. St. Augustine, *Against the Academics,* trans. by J. J. O'Meara, ACW 12, 170 n. 7.

8 Cf. *On the Academics* 1.1.1.

9 Cf. *ibid.* 1.1.3.

sense *of a mortal body* contacts," for there is also a sense of the mind. But I, at the time, was speaking in the manner of those who think of *sense* only in terms of the body, and of *sensible* only in terms of the corporeal. Thus where I have spoken in this way, I have not been sufficiently free from ambiguity except for those who customarily use such terms.

Likewise, I said: "What do you think to live happily is except to live in conformity to what is the best in man?"[10] And a little later, when I was explaining what I consider "the best in man" to be, I say: "Who can doubt that the best in man is anything else than that part of the mind to which, as to a ruler, it is fitting that all other things in man be subject? But in case you ask for another definition, this can be called mind or reason."[11] Indeed, this is true—for, insofar as the nature of man is concerned, there is nothing in him better than mind and reason—and yet the man who wishes to live happily should not live according to this, for then he lives as man lives although, in order to be able to attain happiness, "he should live as God lives."[12] To attain this, our mind should not be self-contented, but should be subjected to God.[13]

Again, replying to an interlocutor, I say: "Here, certainly, you are not in error, for I should like very much that this be for you an omen for the future."[14] Although this was not said seriously but jokingly, nevertheless, I would prefer not to use this word, for I do not recall having read *omen* either in our Sacred Scripture[15] or in a discourse of any ecclesiastical writer although *abomination,* which is found repeatedly in the Sacred Books,[16] is derived from it.

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10 Cf. *ibid.* 1.2.5.
11 Cf. *ibid.*
12 Cf. 1 Peter 4.6.
13 Cf. Ps. 36.7; James 4.7.
14 Cf. *On the Academics* 1.4.11.
15 Cf. 3 Kings 20.33 (Vulgate), where this word is found: *"Quod acceperunt viri pro omine; et festinantes rapuerunt verbum ex ore ejus, atque dixerunt . . ."*
16 Cf. Exod. 8.26; Deut. 7.25, *et cetera.*

(3) In the second book, there is also that utterly inane and senseless fable, so to speak, about love of beauty[17] and love of wisdom,[18] namely, that "they are sisters and begotten of the same parent."[19] What is termed "love of beauty" exists only in idle talk and, for this reason, is by no means a sister of "love of wisdom." Or if this term is to be held in respect because, when translated into Latin, it means love of beauty and is the true and sublime beauty of wisdom, love of beauty in things incorporeal and sublime is the very same thing as love of wisdom, and in no way are they, as it were, two sisters.

In another place when I was discussing the soul, I said: "It will return the more safely into heaven,"[20] but I would have been safer in saying "will go" rather than "will return" because of those who think that human souls, having fallen from or having been driven out of heaven in punishment for their sins, are thrust into bodies here below.[21] But I did not hesitate to say this because I said "into heaven" just as I would say "to God" who is its author and creator. In the same manner, blessed Cyprian did not hesitate to say: "For since we possess a body from the earth, a spirit from heaven, we ourselves are earth and heaven";[22] and in the Book of Ecclesiastes is written: "the spirit shall return to God who gave it."[23] Assuredly, this is to be understood in such a way as not to dissent from the Apostle when he says, "those not yet born had done no good or evil."[24] Unquestionably, then, the original region of the happiness of the soul is God Himself, who did not, indeed, beget it from Himself but created

17 *philocalia.*
18 *philosophia.*
19 Cf. *On the Academics* 2.3.7.
20 Cf. *ibid.* 2.9.22.
21 Cf. *On the City of God* 22.27, where Augustine briefly discusses the seemingly contradictory opinions of Plato and Porphyry on this subject, which, if reconciled, would have led them to the truth.
22 Cf. Cyprian, *De dominica oratione* 16. The central theme of Cyprian's work is the Our Father (cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology* II 353; cf. also *On the Predestination of the Saints* 8.15).
23 Cf. Eccles. 12.7.
24 Cf. Rom. 9.11.

it from nothing as He created the body from the earth.[25] For as to its origin—how it happens to be in the body, whether it is from that one man who was created first when "man became a living soul"[26] or whether, in a similar manner, individual souls are made for individual men—I did not know at that time nor do I know now.[27]

(4) In the third book, I say: "If you ask my opinion, I think that man's highest good is in the mind."[28] I should have said more truthfully, "in God," because to be happy the mind finds joy in Him as its highest good. And I am not pleased with my statement: "I am ready to swear by everything holy."[29]

Again, having said about the Academics that they recognize truth, and call "likeness-to-truth"[30] that which resembles the truth, I went on to characterize as false this likeness-to-truth which they accept. And I was wrong to do this, for two reasons. First, we would have to call false that which resembles the true in some way, but that is also something true in its own class. Second, I intimated that the Academics accept those falsities they call likeness-to-truth while in fact they accept nothing and teach that the wise man accepts nothing.[31] I spoke of them as I did because they call this likeness-to-truth also *the probable.*

I have been rightly displeased, too, with the praise with which I extolled Plato or the Platonists or the Academic philosophers[32] beyond what was proper for such irreligious men, especially those against whose great errors Christian teaching must be defended.

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25 Cf. Gen. 2.7.
26 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.45.
27 Cf. *On Free Choice (De libero arbitrio)* 3.21.59; 3.21.62; *Letter* 166; *An Unfinished Work against Julian (Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum)* 4.104.
28 Cf. *On the Academics* 3.12.27.
29 Cf. *ibid.* 3.16.35.
30 Cf. *ibid.* 3.18.40; also Cicero, *Academics* 2.20.66; 2.23.73.
31 Cf. *On the Academics* 2.6.14.
32 Cf. *ibid.* 3.17.37; 2.10.24.

The following statement also, although made jokingly and in customary ironical fashion, yet should not have been made, namely, that in comparison with the arguments Cicero used in his *Academics,* those arguments whereby I refuted them with a most decisive reasoning were trivial nonsense of mine.[33]

This work begins thus: "O Romanianus, would that a man fitted for herself . . . ."

NOTE. In the autumn of 386, a short time after his conversion and the subsequent resignation of his professorship of rhetoric at Milan, St. Augustine and a few associates, among whom was his mother, St. Monica, retired to the country home of his friend Verecundus in Cassiciacum, north of Milan, where they remained until Augustine's baptism several months later. This select group spent part of the time in philosophic discussions which were recorded by a stenographer. These transcriptions, revised and perhaps embellished by St. Augustine before publication, are his earliest works: *Against the Academics* or *On the Academics, On the Happy Life,* and *On Order.* All are dialogue in form, Ciceronian in style, easy and calm in tone. (Cf. E. K. Rand, "St. Augustine and Dante," *Founders of the Middle Ages* [1929] 256-257.) A fourth dialogue, *Soliloquies,* also belongs to this period (cf. *ibid.* 257; *Confessions* 9.4).

The discussions recorded in the first of these works, *On the Academics,* were probably held from November 10 to November 12, discontinued for a week, resumed on November 19, and completed November 21. The addressee, Romanianus, was Augustine's benefactor and friend, whose son, Licentius, was one of the disputants. Augustine and Trygetius argued against the skepticism of the New Academy which denied the possibility of finding truth with certainty and contended that the wise man should not assent to anything at all, since, in the eyes of the New Academy, all things were vague and uncertain; Alypius and Licentius defended the Academic position.

33 *Ibid.* 3.20.45; cf. Bernard J. Diggs, "St. Augustine against the Academicians," *Traditio* 7 (1949-1951) 73-93.

Chapter 2

ONE BOOK ON THE HAPPY LIFE

(De beata vita liber unus)

I happened to write a book about the happy life, not after, but between the books on the Academics. In fact, it was begun on the occasion of my birthday[1] and completed during a three days' discussion as the book itself indicates. In this book, it was agreed by us who were making the investigation together that the happy life is nothing else than a perfect knowledge of God.

I regret, however, that there I attributed more than I should to Mallius Theodore, to whom I have dedicated this book, although he was learned and a Christian man;[2] that there, too, I often mentioned fortune;[3] and that I said that, during this life, the happy life dwells only in the soul of a wise man regardless of the condition of his body;[4] yet the Apostle hopes for a perfect knowledge of God, the greatest that man can have, in the life to come,[5] for that alone should be called a happy life where the incorruptible and immortal body will be subject to its spirit without any vexation or resistance.[6]

To be sure, I discovered that this book was broken off in our manuscript and was not at all complete and, in this condition, had been copied by certain brethren. When I carried out this present review, I had not found a complete copy in the hands of anyone from which I could make emendations.

1 Cf. *On the Happy Life* 1.6.
2 *Ibid.* 1.5; cf. *On Order (De ordine)* 1.11.31.
3 Cf. *On the Happy Life* 1.5.
4 *Ibid.* 2.14.
5 Cf. I Cor. 13.12-13.
6 *Ibid.* 15.42-44.

This book begins thus: "If to the port of philosophy."

NOTE. The second work reviewed by Augustine in his *Retractations* and the first of his extant writings to be completed, *On the Happy Life*, is a record of harmonious discussions begun in the bathing quarters of Cassiciacum on his birthday, November 13, 386, and concluded at the end of the third day. After Augustine, Monica was the most noteworthy of the participants, and the most Christian. The other disputants were: Augustine's brother, Navigius; two fellow-citizens and pupils, Trygetius and Licentius; two relatives, Lastidianus and Rusticus; and Augustine's son, Adeodatus (cf. *On the Happy Life* 1.6).

The theme of this dialogue is man's desire for happiness and the means of attaining it (cf. *On Order* 1.2.6). Augustine likens man's quest for happiness to the experiences of man on a tempestuous voyage made dangerous by impeding pride. The conclusion reached is that happiness consists in a perfect knowledge of God, the Truth, a knowledge which Augustine admits he and his associates have not acquired. They have, however, determined the goal and St. Monica points out the means of reaching it: "a well-founded faith, a joyful hope, and an ardent love" (cf. *On the Happy Life* 1.4.35).

The dedicatory prologue of this treatise is addressed to a Mallius Theodorus, who may have been the consul of 399, the successor of Honorius and Eutychianus mentioned by Augustine in *On the City of God* 18.54.

Chapter 3

TWO BOOKS ON ORDER

(De ordine libri duo)

(1) At this same time, in fact, between those [books] which were written, *On the Academics*, I wrote also two books, *On Order*, in which I treated the important question of whether the order of divine Providence embraces all things, the good and the evil. But when I saw that the subject was difficult to understand and that I could hardly hope to make it clear to my colleagues by the method of discussion, I pre-

ferred to speak instead of an order of studies by which one can proceed from the corporeal to incorporeal things.[1]

(2) But I regret that in these books, too, the word "fortune" was often inserted;[1a] that I did not add *of the body* when I was speaking of the senses of the body;[2] that I attributed a great deal to the liberal disciplines about which many saintly persons do not know much[3]—some, in truth, know them and are not saintly; that I referred to the Muses, though jokingly, as some sort of goddesses;[4] that I called marveling a defect;[5] that I said that philosophers (who lack true piety) have shone with the light of virtue;[6] and that I proposed two worlds, the one sensible, the other intelligible—not on the authority of Plato or of the Platonists, but on my own—in such a way as though the Lord also meant to indicate this,[7] on the ground that He does not say, "My kingdom is not of *the* world," but "My kingdom is not of *this* world,"[8] although the saying can be found expressed by some phrase. And, in fact, if another world was intended by the Lord Jesus Christ, it can more fittingly be understood as that in which there will be "a new heaven and a new earth"[9] when what we pray for when we say, "Thy kingdom come"[10] will be fulfilled. Plato, indeed, did not err in saying that there is an intelligible world if we are willing to consider not the word, which in that connection is unusual in ecclesiastical usage, but the thing itself. For he called the intelligible world that eternal and unchangeable plan according to which God

1 Reading *quo* ("by which") with all editors before Knöll, rather than *cum* ("when," "since") chosen by Knöll and by Bardy.
1a Cf. *On Order* 2.9.27.
2 *Ibid.* 1.1.3; cf. *Retr.* 1.1.2.
3 Cf. *On Order* 1.8.24; 2.5.15; 2.14.39.
4 *Ibid.* 1.3.6; 1.8.24; 2.14.41.
5 *Ibid.* 1.3.8.
6 *Ibid.* 1.11.31.
7 *Ibid.* 1.11.32.
8 Cf. John 18.36.
9 Cf. Isa. 65.17; 66.22; 2 Peter 3.13; Apoc. 21.1.
10 Cf. Matt. 6.10; also S. Grabowski, *The All-Present God: A Study in St. Augustine* (Milwaukee 1954) 262-263; 303.

made the world.[11] It follows, therefore, that anyone who denies this says that God has made what He made without plan, or that when He made it or before He made it, He did not know what He made if He did not have a plan for making it. But if there was a plan, and there was, Plato seems to have called this the intelligible world. I would not, however, have used this term if, at the time, I had been sufficiently instructed in ecclesiastical writings.

(3) I regret, too, that after I had said: "The greatest efforts should be given to the best way of living," I presently added: "For otherwise our God will not be able to give heed to us, but He will very readily give heed to those who live righteously,"[12] because this was stated as if "God does not hear sinners."[13] It is true that in the Gospel a certain person said this, but he was the man who did not yet know Christ by whom he had been recently cured of bodily blindness.[14]

I regret, too, that I bestowed so much praise on the philosopher, Pythagoras,[15] with the result that anyone who hears or reads can think that I believed that there are no errors in the teachings of Pythagoras although there are many errors, and fundamental ones.

This work begins thus: "Concerning the order of things, Zenobius."

NOTE. *On Order* is the third work evaluated by Augustine. It was written at Cassiciacum after the treatise *On the Happy Life* and before the completion of the three books of *On the Academics.* It is dedicated to Zenobius, a friend (cf. *Retractations, supra),* known to us only through this work and two letters, one from St. Augustine to Zenobius, *Letter* 2, and the other from Dioscorus to St. Augustine, *Letter* 117, in which the writer mentions Zenobius' position as an official in the imperial government, *magister memoriae.* Augustine and Zenobius had previously discussed the problem of order, but, because the latter was not satisfied with the results, Augustine promised a

11 Cf. Acts 17.24-28.
12 Cf. *On Order* 2.20.52.
13 Cf. John 9.31.
14 Cf. *ibid.* 29-34.
15 Cf. *On Order* 2.20.53-54.

further discussion of the subject. The third disputation held at Cassiciacum, November, 386, and recorded in the present treatise, is the fulfillment of that promise.

In addition to Augustine, Alypius, Navigius, Licentius, and Trygetius who had recently returned from military service, take part in the disputation. In his *Retractations,* Augustine states clearly the status and purpose of the subject under discussion: a consideration of the important question of whether Providence embraces all things, both the good and the evil. The principal topics treated are order and a related one, the problem of evil in the universe. At the end of the dialogue, the conclusion is reached that Providence does not exclude evil in this world, but that it directs the wise man whose moral and intellectual education includes training in the liberal arts, a discipline that leads to his use of reason and authority as a guide. This is the only way, says Augustine, whereby man can attain a perfect knowledge of God. This dialogue contains the basic principles of Augustinian philosophy (cf. the Introduction to the translation of *De ordine* by Robert P. Russell, O.S.A., FC 5.229-233).

Chapter 4

SOLILOQUIES, TWO BOOKS

(Soliloquia, libri duo)

(1) Meanwhile, induced by my zeal and love for searching out, by reason, the truth concerning those matters which I especially desired to know, I also wrote two books, questioning myself and answering myself as if we were two—reason and I—although I was alone. Accordingly, I entitled this work *Soliloquies;* but it has remained unfinished. However, in the first book, the question is raised, and in one way or another made clear, what kind of a man he ought to be who wishes to comprehend wisdom, for assuredly, it is comprehended, not by corporeal sense, but by the mind. At the end of the book, by a process of reasoning, the conclusion is reached that

those things which truly exist are immortal. In the second book, moreover, there is a long discussion on the immortality of the soul, but it is not completed.

(2) In these books, I certainly do not approve of what I said in the prayer: "O God, who has willed that only the pure know the truth,"[1] for it can be said in reply that many, even those who are not pure, know many truths; nor is there any explanation here of what is the truth which the pure alone can know, and what knowing is.

If God is to be understood by the statement made here: "O God, whose kingdom is the whole world unknown to the sense,"[2] I should have added words so that it would be expressed thus: "unknown to the sense *of the mortal body*." If, however, the world "unknown to the sense" was meant, the one which will exist "in a new heaven and a new earth"[3] is rightly understood. Here, too, however, the words mentioned should be added so that the reading would be: "the sense of the mortal body." But I was still speaking according to the way in which the sense of the mortal body is properly designated. What I have already said above concerning this[4] need not be repeated again and again, but it should be recalled wherever this form of expression is found in my writings.

(3) Again, where I said about the Father and the Son: "He who begets and He whom He begets *is* one,"[5] I should have said, "*are* one" as Truth itself clearly indicates, saying: "I and the Father are one."[6]

And I am not pleased with the remark that, in this life, the soul is already happy in the knowledge of God,[7] unless, perhaps, through hope.

Likewise, this statement of mine does not sound well: "There is more than one way of attaining union with wis-

1 Cf. *Soliloquies (Soliloquia)* 1.1.2.
2 *Ibid.* 1.1.3.
3 Cf. Isa. 65.17; 66.22; 2 Peter 3.13; Apoc. 21.1.
4 Cf. *Retr., supra.*
5 Cf. *Soliloquies* 1.1.4.
6 Cf. John 10.30.
7 Cf. *Soliloquies* 1.7.14.

dom,"[8] as if there were another way besides Christ who said: "I am the way."[9] I should, therefore, have avoided this offense to pious ears; even though there is that one, universal way, yet there are other ways about which also we sing in the Psalm: "O Lord, make known to me Thy ways and teach me Thy paths."[10]

With regard to the statement I made there: "These things of sense must be entirely fled from,"[11] I should have been on my guard lest I be thought to hold the opinion of the false philosopher, Porphyry, according to which every body must be fled from.[12] I did not say, however, "*all* things of sense," but "these," that is, the corruptible things. But instead, I should have said: "things of sense of this kind, however, will not be the things of sense of 'the new heaven and the new earth'[13] of the world to come."

(4) Again, in a certain place, I said that "without a doubt, those well versed in the liberal disciplines bring out, in learning, the knowledge buried in oblivion within them and, in a certain sense, dig it out."[14] But I disapprove of this also. For it is more credible that even those who are ignorant of them, when properly questioned, reply truly concerning certain disciplines because, when they have the capacity to grasp it, the light of eternal reason by which they perceive those unchangeable truths is present in them. But this is not because they knew these things at some time or other and have forgotten them, as it seemed to Plato or men like him.[15] Insofar as an opportunity was given in keeping with the work I had

8 *Ibid.* 1.13.23.
9 Cf. John 14.6.
10 Cf. Ps. 24.4.
11 Cf. *Soliloquies* 1.14.24.
12 Cf. Porphyry, *Ad Marcum* 8.32.34; *De regressu animae, apud: On the City of God* 10.29; 22.12; 22.26; 22.27; 22.28.
13 Cf. Isa. 65.17; 66.22; 2 Peter 3.13; Apoc. 21.1.
14 Cf. *Soliloquies* 2.20.35.
15 Cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 72E.

undertaken, I have argued against the opinion of these men in the twelfth book of *On the Trinity*.[16]

This work begins as follows: "As I was revolving in mind many diverse matters."

NOTE. The *Soliloquies*, an unfinished work, is presented by St. Augustine as a dialogue between himself and his reason. According to the *Retractations*, this work was written during the same period as the three dialogues previously reviewed: *"Inter haec scripsi etiam duo volumina . . ."* (cf. *Retractations, supra*). Hence, the time usually assigned to its composition is the end of 386 or the beginning of 387.

Understandably, the philosophic conversations of Augustine and his companions at Cassiciacum left something to be desired so far as Augustine's personal difficulties were concerned. In his work, *On Order* (1.3.6), he tells us that he habitually spent almost the first half of the night in reflection, or sometimes the second half if problems persisted. The *Soliloquies* may be a presentation of these private meditations or self-communings, as has often been suggested.

This work, inspired by a zealous, ardent desire to find the truth (cf. *Retractations* 1.4.1), begins with a long, exalted, moving prayer followed by a statement of the purpose of the investigation: the attainment of a knowledge of God and the soul. The ardent intensity of Augustine's account of this quest, in marked contrast to the serenity of expression found in the other three dialogues of Cassiciacum, calls to mind the ardent Augustine of the *Confessions*.

The *Retractations* contains a summary of the contents and the purpose of the present work as well as explanations and corrections of certain passages. The most striking of the latter are Augustine's statement of the doctrine of divine illumination in lieu of Plato's doctrine of reminiscence, and his modification of the affirmation that the soul is happy in this life in a knowledge of God (cf. *ibid.* 1.2 NOTE).

16 Cf. *On the Trinity* 12.15.24; also Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.24.57 *re* Plato's *Meno*.

Chapter 5

ONE BOOK ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

(De inmortalitate animae liber unus)

(1) After the books, *Soliloquies,* and after my recent return from the country to Milan, I wrote a book, *On the Immortality of the Soul.* I had intended this as a reminder to me, so to speak, to complete the *Soliloquies,* which had remained unfinished; but it fell, I know not how, into the hands of men against my will and is listed among my works. First of all, because of the intricacy and brevity of its reasoning, it is so obscure that even my attention flags as I read it and I, myself, can scarcely understand it.

(2) During a certain discussion in this book, thinking only of the souls of men, I said: "Science does not exist in one who learns nothing."[1] Likewise in another place, I said: "Science does not include anything that does not pertain to some branch of knowledge."[2] It did not occur to me that God does not learn the branches of knowledge and yet He has a knowledge of all things including also a foreknowledge of future events.

Something which I said there is similar: "Only the mind has life with reason";[3] for God has life with reason since in Him there is the highest life and the highest reason. And sometime previously, I made this statement: "Whatever is

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1 Cf. *On the Immortality of the Soul* 1.1; also L. Schopp's translation of this treatise, FC 4.15 n. 1, where an explanation of *disciplina* translated as "science" is found; also his references to the opinions of other writers (J. Geyser and E. Gilson) *ibid.;* also *ibid.* n. 2 for the use of *anima, animus,* and *spiritus* in Augustine's works. Cf. also the translation of this treatise by George G Leckie (New York 1938), reprinted in *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine,* ed. by W. J. Oates, I 301-316.

2 Cf. *On the Immortality of the Soul* 1.1.

3 *Ibid.* 4.5.

understood is so always,"[4] although the mind also is understood which, assuredly, is not so always.

In truth, I certainly would not have said what I said: "The mind can be separated from eternal reason because it is not connected with it in space,"[5] if, at that time, I were already so versed in Sacred Scripture that I could recall what is written: "Your sins come between you and God."[6] From this, one may understand that it is possible to speak of a separation even of those things which had been connected, not in space, but incorporeally.

(3) I could not even recall what the following statement of mine means: "If the soul is without a body, it is not in this world,"[7] for do not the souls of the dead either have bodies or they are not in this world?—as if, in truth, the dead were not in this world. But since to be "without a body" can be understood in a good sense, perhaps by the word "body," I had reference to bodily ills. But if this is true, I used the word in a most unusual way.

The following also was said rashly: "A form of the body by which it exists, insofar as it exists, is given by the highest Being through the soul. The body, then, subsists through the soul and exists by reason of the very thing whereby it is animated, either universally as the world, or individually as each and every living being within the world."[8] All this was said in an utterly rash manner.

This book begins thus: "If science exists anywhere."

At the very time that I was about to receive baptism in Milan,[9] I also attempted to write books on the liberal arts,[10] questioning those who were with me and who were not adverse to studies of this nature, and desiring by definite steps,

4 *Ibid.* 1.1.
5 *Ibid.* 6.11.
6 Cf. Isa. 59.2.
7 Cf. *On the Immortality of the Soul* 13.22.
8 *Ibid.* 15.24.
9 Cf. *Confessions* 9.6.14.
10 Cf. *Retr.* 1.10.1.

so to speak, to reach things incorporeal through things corporeal and to lead others to them. But I was able to complete only the book on grammar—which I lost later from our library—and six books, *On Music,* pertaining to that part which is called rhythm.[11] I wrote these six books, however, only after I was baptized and had returned to Africa from Italy, for I had only begun this art at Milan. Of the other five arts likewise begun there—dialectic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, and philosophy—the beginnings alone remained and I lost even these. However, I think that some people have them.

NOTE. Augustine considers this work obscure and difficult because of the intricacy and brevity of its arguments (cf. *Retractations* 5.1). Nevertheless, it is an important treatise because its author is one of the first writers of the West with Christian convictions to treat the important and challenging subject of the immortality of the soul. Moreover, though he speaks disparagingly of this work, it reveals the stage in the development of his thought on this subject at a momentous period of his life. In addition to his general adverse criticism of this treatise in the *Retractations,* there are several emendations, explanations, or clarifications of certain passages (sects. 2-3).

To his review of *On the Immortality of the Soul,* Augustine appends remarks about the attempt made by him before his baptism to write "books" on the liberal arts or disciplines in order to arrive at or lead to things incorporeal through things corporeal. Of these, he succeeded in completing only the book on grammar which he "lost from his bookcase" *(ibid.).* After his baptism and his subsequent return to Africa, he finished the six books, *On Music* (treated *infra,* ch. 10), a work begun in Milan.

In the text of the *Retractations* used here (CSEL 36), Augustine's remarks on these written or projected works on the liberal arts are included in this chapter (5). In other editions, they form a separate chapter. For the resulting variation in chapter numbering, see *supra,* p. xx.

11 Cf. *Letter* 101, where Augustine mentions his plan to write six books on melody *(de melo).*

Chapter 6

TWO BOOKS ON THE WAY OF LIFE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WAY OF LIFE OF THE MANICHAEANS

(De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manicheorum libri duo)

(1) After my baptism but while I was in Rome,[1] unable to endure in silence the boasting of the Manichaeans about their false and fallacious continence or abstinence because of which, in order to deceive the unlearned, they consider themselves superior to true Christians with whom they are not to be compared, I wrote two books: one, *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church,* and the other, *On the Way of Life of the Manichaeans.*

(2) Now in that book, *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church,* where I cited the Scriptural passage which reads: "Since for Thy sake we are punished the whole day long, we are counted as sheep,"[2] the inaccuracy of my manuscript misled me, not sufficiently mindful of the Scriptures to which I had not yet become accustomed. For other manuscripts of the same translation do not have: "For Thy sake we are punished," but: "For Thy sake we are punished by death," and others express this by a single word, *mortificamur* ("we are put to death"). The Greek manuscripts show that this word is the more accurate; it is from this language, according to the Septuagint, that the Latin translation of the ancient Holy Scriptures has been made.[3] And yet, on the basis of these words, that is, "For Thy sake we are punished," I have said in discussion many things on these very subjects which I do

1 Cf. *Confessions* 8.2.5; 9.8.17.

2 Cf. *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church* 1.9.14; Ps. 43.23; Rom. 8.36.

3 The reading in both the Old Testament (Ps. 43.23) and the New Testament (Rom. 8.36), Vulgate version, is *mortificamur.*

not disapprove of as false; nevertheless, by these words at least, I certainly did not show what I wished to show: the harmony of the Old and New Testaments. I have explained, however, how this error stole upon me. On the other hand, by other proofs, I adequately proved this very harmony.[4]

(3) Shortly afterwards, I cited proof from the Book of Wisdom in which was written according to our manuscript: "For wisdom teaches sobriety and justice and virtue,"[5] and, according to these words, I have, indeed, spoken the truth, but truth discovered because of an error. For what is more true than that wisdom teaches the truth of contemplation, which I believed was designated by the term temperance; and integrity of action, which I wished to be understood by two other words, justice and virtue, since the more correct manuscripts of the same translation have: "For it teaches sobriety and wisdom and justice and virtue"? By all these words, in fact, the Latin translator has designated these four virtues which are accustomed to be especially on the lips of philosophers:[6] he calls temperance restraint, gives prudence the name of wisdom, but speaks of fortitude as virtue, and translates justice alone by its own name. A long time afterwards, however, in the Greek manuscripts of the same Book of Wisdom, I found these four virtues designated by the names given them by the Greeks.

Likewise, what I cited from the Book of Solomon: "Vanity of the vain, said Ecclesiastes,"[7] I have actually read in many manuscripts, but the Greek does not have this. It has rather: "vanity of vanities,"[8] as I found out later, and I discovered

4 Cf. *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church* 1.16.26-29.

5 Cf. *ibid.* 1.16.27; Wisd. 8.7; also *On the City of God* 15.13 where Augustine briefly discusses the discrepancy between the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew texts of the Bible.

6 Cf. Plato, *Laws* 963C (cf. R. G. Bury's translation in the Loeb Classical Library, vol. II of the *Laws,* p. 546f.); Plato, *Phaedo* 68-70E (cf. H. N. Fowler's translation in the Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1, pp. 235-241); Cicero, *About the Ends of Goods and Evils (De finibus bonorum et malorum)* 2.51.

7 Cf. *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church* 1.21.39.

8 Cf. Eccles. 1.2.

that the Latin manuscripts that have "of vanities," not "of the vain," are more correct. Nevertheless, what I stated in consequence of this error appears true according to the evidence.

(4) Furthermore, I made the statement: "Let us first love with full love Him—that is, God—whom we desire to know."[9] It would have been better to say, "sincere" rather than "full" —unless perhaps it be thought that the love of God will not be greater when we shall see Him "face to face."[10] Accordingly, let us understand this in such a way that by "full" I meant the greatest love possible as long as we walk by faith;[11] for it will be fuller, or rather fullest, only by sight. Similarly, what I said about those who minister to the needy: "They are called merciful even though they are wise to the extent that they are no longer disturbed by any grief of mind,"[12] should not be understood as though I had stated that there are in this life wise men of this kind, for I did not say, "*since* they are" but, "*even though* they are."

(5) In another place where I said:[13] "Then, in truth, when this human love has nourished and strengthened the soul clinging to its breasts, it has become capable of following God. When its divine majesty has begun to reveal itself to as much of the soul as suffices while it is an inhabitant of this earth, so great a fire of charity is born and so great a flame of divine love rises that, after all vices are burned out in a man sanctified and purified, it becomes quite clear how divinely the following was said, 'I am a consuming fire,' "[14] the Pelagians may think that I meant that such perfection

9 Cf. *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church* 1.25.47. The words "*plena caritate*" are variously translated: "with complete devotion," D. A. Gallagher and I. J. Gallagher, trans. of the treatise, *The Catholic and Manichaean Ways of Life*, FC 56.39; "full affection," W. J. Oates (ed.), *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine* (New York 1948) 342.

10 Cf. 1 Cor. 13.12.

11 Cf. 2 Cor. 5.7.

12 Cf. *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church* 1.27.53.

13 Cf. *ibid.* 1.30.64.

14 Cf. Deut. 4.24; Heb. 12.29.

can be attained in this mortal life. But they should not think this, for the fire of charity which has become capable of following God and so great that it consumes all vices, can surely be born and increase in this life. However, to attain this—the reason for its birth—and to eradicate all vice in man, is not possible here below,[15] and yet this great objective is attained by the same fire of charity where and when it can be attained, so that, just as "the laver of regeneration"[16] cleanses from the guilt of all sins which human birth has inherited and iniquity has incurred, this perfection cleanses from the stain of all vices without which human weakness cannot exist in this world. It is in this way, too, that we must understand the words of the Apostle: "Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for her . . . cleansing in the bath of water by means of the Word in order that He might present to Himself the Church in all her glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing."[17] For here there is "the bath of water by means of the Word,"[18] by which the Church is cleansed. But since the whole Church, as long as it is here, says: "Forgive us our debts,"[19] certainly, here, it is not "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing."[20] From what it receives here, however, it is led to that glory which is not here, and to perfection.

(6) In the other book, whose title is *On the Way of Life of the Manichaeans,* I said: "The goodness of God so orders all things that have turned aside that they are in the place in which they can exist most suitably until, by ordered movements, they return to that from which they have turned aside."[21] This should not be interpreted as though all things "return to that from which they have turned aside," as it

15 i.e., in this life.
16 Cf. Titus 3.5.
17 Cf. Eph. 5.25-27.
18 Cf. *ibid.* 5.26.
19 Cf. Matt. 6.12-18.
20 Cf. Eph. 5.27.
21 Cf. *On the Way of Life of the Manichaeans* 2.7.9.

seemed to Origen,[22] but [should be applied] only to all those things that return. For those who will be punished by everlasting fire will not return to God from whom they have turned aside, although "all things which have turned aside" are so ordered "that they are in a place where they can exist most suitably," for even those who do not return are most suitably in a place of punishment.

In another place I say: "Practically no one doubts that beetles live on dung rolled into a ball by them and buried."[23] However, many doubt that this example is true, and many may not even have heard it.

This book begins as follows: "In other books I think that we have accomplished enough."

NOTE. About 388, during his stay in Rome after his baptism and before his return to Africa, Augustine wrote a twofold work entitled *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church and the Way of Life of the Manichaeans* with the intention of silencing the false, boastful assertions of the Manichaeans about their continence and abstinence, and of protesting against their finding fault with the Scriptures (cf. *Retractations* 1.6.1; *On the Way of Life of the Catholic Church* 1.1.2-1.1.3).

In this treatise, Augustine contrasts the doctrine and the moral practices of the early Christian Church with the teachings of the Manichaean sect and the pretensions of its followers to asceticism. He also defends the authority of the Old Testament, which the Manichaeans refused to accept, and discusses the harmony of the Old and New Testaments in his attempt to defend it and bring to light the inconsistency of the Manichaeans in their teaching about the Bible. His experiences as a Christian among Christians and as an auditor in the Manichaean sect for nine years enabled him to write on these subjects. His defense of the Catholic Church and his vigorous polemic against the Manichaeans contained in this work are important because they give authentic information about the early Church and about the teachings of a sect whose heresy had taken firm root in Roman Africa at this time, and was, as a result, a menace to Christianity.

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22 Cf. Origen, *De principiis* 2.3.3 (cf. B. Altaner, *Patrology* 228); *On the City of God* 21.17; *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* 3.10; *An Unfinished Work against Julian* 5.47, 6.10; *On Heresies* 43. (Müller [see Bibl.] pp. 82-85, 156.)

23 *On the Way of Life of the Manichaeans* 2.17.63.

In his *Retractations,* Augustine makes only a few emendations of this treatise. He comments on passages that are incorrect because of faulty Scriptural texts (1.6.2, 1.6.3) and suggests that *sincere* rather than *full* or *complete* love of God be used in regard to acquiring a knowledge of God, and forestalls (sect. 4) a misunderstanding of another passage. In the next section (5), he expounds a passage from Holy Scripture and warns the Pelagians against its misinterpretation.

He then reviews two passages of the present treatise: first, he clarifies his own position in opposition to a position taken by Origen; second, he disagrees with his own statement about man's knowledge of the habits of beetles (1.6.6).

Chapter 7

ONE BOOK ON THE QUANTITY OF THE SOUL

(De animae quantitate liber unus)

(1) In the same city,[1] I wrote a dialogue in which there is an investigation and discussion of many things pertaining to the soul: its origin, its nature, its quantity, the reason for its being given to the body, how it is affected on coming to the body, and how, on leaving the body. But since its quantity was discussed most carefully and most thoroughly in order that, if we could, we might show that it lacks corporeal quantity and yet is something great, the entire book receives its name from this one investigation: it is called *On the Quantity of the Soul.*[2]

(2) A statement I made in this book: "It seems to me that the soul has brought all the arts with it and that what is

1 Rome. Cf. *Retr.* 1.6.1.

2 The rendition of the word *quantitas* varies in English translations of this treatise. For example, F. E. Tourscher entitles this work, *The Measure of the Soul* (Philadelphia 1933); J. E. Colleran, *The Greatness of the Soul* (ACW 9); J. J. McMahon, *The Magnitude of the Soul* (FC 4). My final decision to translate it "quantity" was due, in large measure, to V. J. Bourke's explanation of *quantitas* as used in this treatise (*Augustine's Quest of Wisdom* 101-103).

called learning is nothing else than remembering and recalling,"[3] should not be so interpreted as if, according to this, I agree that the soul, at some time, has lived either in another body or elsewhere in a body or outside a body, and that previously, in another life, it has learned the responses it makes when questioned, since it has not learned them here. For, as we have already said above in this work,[4] it can happen that this is possible, since the soul is intelligible by nature and is joined, not only to intelligible, but also to immutable things. It is so made and ordered that when it moves toward those things to which it is joined or toward itself, it can give true answers concerning these things to the degree that it sees them. To be sure, it has not brought all the arts with it in the same manner in which it has them within itself; for it can only speak about what it has learned here regarding the arts that pertain to the senses of the body, such as much of medicine, and all that falls under astrology. But when it has been questioned and reminded in the right way, either by itself or by another, in respect to those things which the intelligence alone comprehends, it is able to reply for the reason I have given.

(3) In another place I say: "I would like to say more on this subject and while I am, as it were, admonishing you, bind myself to do the same thing, namely, to render an account of myself to myself to whom I am especially responsible."[5] It seems to me that, in this passage, I should rather have said: "I should render an account *to God* to whom I am especially responsible." But since man must first render an account to himself, so that, having taken a step, so to speak, at that point, he may rise and be lifted up to God as that younger son who first "returning to himself," then said: "I

3 *On the Quantity of the Soul* 20.34. Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.24.58 (here Cicero summarizes Plato's view on this subject as expressed in the *Phaedo*); also Augustine, *On the Trinity* 12.15.24 (here Augustine, like Cicero, refers to an example of the point in question according to Plato in the *Meno*).

4 Cf. *Retr.* 1.4.4.

5 *On the Quantity of the Soul* 28.55.

will get up and go to my father."[6] For this reason, I spoke in this way. And then presently, I added: "and thus to become a slave loyal to his master."[7] And so when I said: "To whom I am especially responsible," I was referring to mankind; for I am responsible to myself more than to all other men, although to God more than to myself.

This book begins thus: "Since I see that you have an abundance of leisure."

NOTE. In a letter to his friend, Evodius (*Letter* 162, 415 A.D.), Augustine mentions the present dialogue, *On the Quantity of the Soul,* in which he and Evodius were the participants during their stay in Rome before they returned to Tagaste, that is, about 388. More than a decade after this letter was written, Augustine summarized this disputatious conversation in his *Retractations* (1.7.1) where he says that six questions on the soul, proposed by Evodius, were discussed: its origin, its nature, the extent of its quantity, the reason for its union with the body, the nature and effect of this association, and the effect on it when they are separated. He states that this work is entitled *On the Quantity of the Soul* because of the care and thoroughness with which he treats the third question, *"quanta est"* (cf. *Retractations, supra; The Magnitude of the Soul,* translated by John J. McMahon, S.J., FC 4, Introduction p. 51; *The Greatness of the Soul,* translated by Joseph M. Colleran, ACW 9, Introduction p. 5).

Quantity in reference to the soul is, then, the topic to which most of this disputation is devoted, a quantity not measurable in space but according to a soul's power to act. In later Scholastic philosophy, this magnitude or measure of power is termed "virtual quantity." Augustine himself affirms that there is no quantity in the soul except in the sense of "virtual quantity," an extent of degree or power (cf. V. Bourke, *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom* 102; see further 101-103. Cf. ACW 9, Introduction p. 5). Augustine wrote this treatise both to prove the incorporeality of the soul and, at the same time, to show that it is something great (*"tamen magnum aliquid esse," Retractations* 1.7.1. Cf. FC 4, Introduction p. 51; *On the Quantity of the Soul* 31.64; 32.69, etc.).

In an earlier work, Augustine stated that wisdom is a condition of the soul; whoever possesses it through the truth is happy. "This means to have God within the soul" (cf. *On the Happy Life* 4.33-34; *Retractations* 1.2). In a later work, *Dis-*

6 Luke 15.17-18.

7 *On the Quantity of the Soul* 28.55; cf. Horace, *Satires* 2.7.2.

courses on the Psalms (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 135.8; cf. 35.8), written about 394-418, he says that truth constitutes "the beatifying object of man which lies in the contemplation of God" (cf. S. Grabowski, *The All-Present God* 273; *On the Trinity* 14.12.15).

The author ends this treatise in a compelling, unusual presentation of the seven stages of the soul in its progress toward the contemplation of God who is Truth, and of union with Him. These seven activities, or degrees of power, in the soul are represented by St. Augustine as a necessary advance of the soul in its ascent to God (cf. *On the Quantity of the Soul* 35.79-36.81). This passage alone entitles the present work to an important place, not only in Augustine's writings, but also in the development of ascetic theology.

Previously, Augustine had spoken of three degrees or operations of the soul (*On Order* 2.18.48), which are equivalent to the seven stages mentioned in the present dialogue (33.70-33.76; FC 4, Introduction p. 54), and to the three ways of purification, illumination, and contemplation of the spiritual life of the soul as it advances toward perfection or union with God (33.70-36.81; FC 4, Introduction pp. 54-55).

This work is remarkable, too, for "the number of psychological definitions which it contains. The most famous of these is the statement that soul, or mind is 'a certain substance, participating in endowed reason adapted to the ruling of the body' " (cf. V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 103; ACW 9.39; FC 4.83; *On the Quantity of the Soul* 13.22). Among others are the definition of sensation (*ibid.* 29.57), the "distinction between reason and ratiocination" (cf. V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 103; cf. *On the Quantity of the Soul* 27.53), and a "good approach to a definitive notion of science in the philosophical sense of knowledge" (cf. V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 103; cf. *On the Quantity of the Soul* 29.57). This work, then, is valuable, not only from a theological, but also from a psychological and philosophical point of view.

Chapter 8

THREE BOOKS ON FREE CHOICE

(De libero arbitrio libri tres)

(1) While we were still staying in Rome, we wanted, by means of discussion, to inquire into the source of evil, and we so conducted our disputation that we hoped that, if possible, considered and prolonged reasoning would bring to our understanding what we, on divine authority, believed about this matter, so far as we, with God's help, could accomplish our purpose through discussion. And since, after a thorough examination and discussion, we agreed that the sole source of evil is in the free choice of the will, the three books which this discussion produced have been called *On Free Choice*.[1] After I was ordained a priest at Hippo Regius, I completed, in Africa, the second and third of these books, insofar as I could at the time.

(2) So many subjects were discussed in these books that we postponed some incidental questions, which either I could not solve or which required lengthy discussion at the time. Yet, even in this case, on each point, or rather on all points, of the same questions where what was more in harmony with truth was not clear, our reasoning, nevertheless, came to the conclusion that, no matter which of these was true, it should be believed, or at least made clear, that God is to be praised. In fact, this discussion was taken up because of those who deny that the source of evil has its origin in the free choice of the will and who contend that, if this is so, God, the Creator of all natures, is to be blamed. In this way, according to the error of their impiety[2]—for they are the Manichaeans —they wish to introduce a kind of fundamental or natural

1 Cf. *Letter* 31, to Paulinus and Therasia. In this letter, Augustine mentions that he has sent the three books of this treatise to Paulinus.

2 Cf. *On Heresies* 46 (Müller [see Bibl.] pp. 84-97, 158-172). Cf. *Confessions* 5.5.8 and 5.7.12.

evil, unchangeable and coeternal with God.[3] But because this was the question proposed, there was no discussion in these books about the grace of God whereby He has so foreordained His elect that He Himself also prepares the wills[4] of those among them who are already using free choice. When, however, an opportunity to mention this grace presented itself, it was mentioned in passing, but not defended by laborious reasoning as though it were the subject under discussion. For it is one thing to inquire into the source of evil and another to inquire how one can return to his original good or reach one that is greater.

(3) Hence, the new Pelagian heretics who treat free choice of the will in such a way as not to leave a place for the grace of God, for they assert that it is given according to our merits,[5] should not boast as though I have pleaded their cause, because, in these books, I have said many things in defense of free choice which the purpose of this disputation required. To be sure, in the first book I said: "Evil deeds are punished by the justice of God," and I added: "for they would not be punished justly unless they were done voluntarily."[6] Again, after I showed that this good will of ours is so great a good that it is rightly to be preferred to all corporeal and external goods, I said: "Hence, I believe, you now see that it is in the power of our will to enjoy or lack this wonderful and true good; for what is so inherent in the will as the will itself?"[7]

And in another place, I say: "What reason, then, is there for our believing that we should doubt that, even though we were never wise before, nevertheless, by our will we deserve and live a praiseworthy and happy life, and, by our will, a shameful and unhappy one?"[8] In another place, again I say: "From this it follows that whoever wills to live rightly and

3 Cf. *On the Gift of Perseverance (De dono perseverantiae)* 11.27, where Augustine quotes this passage of the *Retractations.*
4 Cf. Prov. 8.35 according to the Septuagint.
5 Cf. *On Heresies* 88 (Müller, pp. 122-125, 210-216).
6 Cf. *On Free Choice* 1.1.1.
7 *Ibid.* 1.12.26.
8 *Ibid.* 1.13.28.

virtuously, if he wishes to will this in preference to transitory things, attains this great objective with such great facility that, by the act of his will, he immediately possesses what he wished."[9] In like manner, I said elsewhere: "For that eternal law—to whose consideration it is now time to return—has established with unchangeable stability that merit is in the will, but reward and punishment, in happiness and misery."[10] And in another place, I say: "It is certain that what each one chooses to seek after and embrace is placed in the will."[11] Again, in the second book, I say: "For man himself, insofar as he is man, is something good because he can live rightly when he wills."[12] And in another place, I said: "One cannot act rightly except by this same free choice of the will."[13] And in the third book, I say: "Why is it necessary to seek the source of that movement by which the will is turned from the unchangeable to the changeable good, since we agree that this belongs only to the soul and is voluntary and, on this account, culpable, since, indeed, all useful teaching on this subject serves this purpose, namely, to censure and check the aforesaid movement and to turn our will from perishable things to the enjoyment of eternal good?"[14] And in another place, I say: "The voice of truth makes herself heard vaguely in you. For you could not think that anything is in our power except that when we will, we act. There is nothing, therefore, so entirely in our power as the will itself, for as soon as we will, the will is truly present without delay, instantly."[15] And then, in another place, I say: "For if you are praised for seeing what you ought to do, though you see this only in Him who is immutable Truth, how much more should He be praised

9 *Ibid.* 1.13.29.
10 *Ibid.* 1.14.30.
11 *Ibid.* 1.16.34.
12 *Ibid.* 2.1.2.
13 *Ibid.* 2.18.47.
14 *Ibid.* 3.1.2.
15 *Ibid.* 3.3.7. "Vaguely"; the Latin word is *obscure* in the edition (CSEL 36) used. In other editions, the text reads *optime* ("splendidly"); thus the Maurists, followed by G. Bardy, *Les révisions* 316.

who has both ordered and given the power to will[16] and has not permitted refusal to will without punishment?" Then I added the words: "For if every man is obligated for what he has received and if man was so made that he sins necessarily, then he is obliged to sin. When he sins, therefore, he does what he is obliged to do. But if it is impious to say this, then a man's own nature does not force him to sin."[17] And at another time, I said: "What, then, could be prior to the will and be its cause? For either it is the will itself and is not separated from the root of the will, or it is not the will and there is no sin. Therefore, either the will is the first cause of sin, or no sin is the first cause of sin and there is nothing to which sin can be attributed except the sinner. Hence, there is nothing to which sin can be rightly attributed except the will."[18] And a little later, I said: "Who sins in that which he cannot avoid in any way? Yet sin is committed; therefore, it can be avoided."[19] In a certain book of his, Pelagius used this testimony of mine. When I answered this book, I chose that the title of my book be *On Nature and Grace (De natura et gratia)*.[20]

(4) In these and similar statements of mine, because there was no mention of the grace of God, which was not the subject under discussion at the time, the Pelagians think or may think that we held their opinion. But they are mistaken in thinking this. For it is precisely the will by which one sins and lives rightly, a subject we discussed here. Unless this will, then, is freed by the grace of God from the servitude by which it has been made "a servant of sin,"[21] and unless it is aided to overcome its vices, mortal men cannot live rightly and devoutly. And if this divine beneficence by which the will is freed had not preceded it, it would be given according to its

16 Cf. Phil. 2.13.
17 Cf. *On Free Choice* 3.16.46.
18 *Ibid.* 3.17.49.
19 *Ibid.* 3.18.50.
20 Cf. *Retr.* 2.68.
21 Cf. Rom. 6.17; 6.20.

merits and would not be grace, which is certainly given gratuitously. In other works of mine,[22] in refuting the enemies of this grace, the new heretics, I have dealt adequately with this matter, although in these books, *On Free Choice*, which, to be sure, were written not against them—for they were not yet in existence—but against the Manichaeans, we were not entirely silent about this grace of God which they, with unspeakable impiety, attempt to deny. In fact, in the second book, we said: "Not only the great but also the least goods can exist only from Him from whom all good things are, that is, from God."[23] And shortly afterwards, I said: "The virtues by which man lives rightly are great goods; but the beauty of all bodies whatsoever, without which man can live rightly, are the least goods; but the powers of the soul, without which man cannot live rightly, are intermediate goods. No one uses the virtues wrongly, but anyone can use the other goods, that is, the intermediate and the least, not only rightly, but also wrongly. And, therefore, no one uses virtue wrongly because the function of virtue is the good use of those things which we can, indeed, use wrongly. However, no one by using rightly uses wrongly. For this reason, the plenitude and greatness of the goodness of God have provided not only the great, but also the intermediate and the least goods. His goodness should be praised more for the great than the intermediate goods, and more for the intermediate than the least goods, but even more for all than if He had not bestowed all."[24]

And in another place, I said: "Only make sure to hold firm to your religious conviction that you know of no good, either by the senses, or by the intellect, or in any other way,

22 Cf., for example, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.18.36 (*Retr.* 2.87); *On the Spirit and the Letter* 27.47 (*Retr.* 2.63); *On Nature and Grace* 47.52, 50.55 (*Retr.* 2.68) ; *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* 7 (*Retr.* 2.73); *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin* 1.4.5 (*Retr.* 2.76); *On Grace and Free Choice* 5.10, 21.42 (*Retr.* 2.92).

23 Cf. *On Free Choice* 2.19.50.

24 *Ibid.*

that does not come from God."[25] Likewise, in another place, I said: "But since man cannot rise of his own free will as he fell of his own free will, with firm faith let us hold fast to the right hand of God, that is, of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is stretched out to us from above."[26]

(5) And in the third book,[27] after I had mentioned the passage Pelagius had put to his use from my works: "For who, then, sins through something he, by no means, can avoid? Yet sin is committed; it can, therefore, be avoided,"[28] immediately, I proceeded to add: "And yet, indeed, certain acts done through ignorance are considered wrong and judged in need of correction, as we read in the Sacred documents, for the Apostle says: 'I obtained mercy because I acted ignorantly,'[29] and the Prophet says: 'Remember not the sins of my youth and of my ignorance.'[30] Acts done of necessity, when a man wills to do right and cannot, must, indeed, be considered wrong. For whence are these words: 'For I do not the good that I wish, but the evil that I hate, that I do.'[31] And this: 'To will is within my power, but to accomplish what is good is not.'[32] This also: 'The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, so that you do not do what you would.'[33] But all these things apply to men who come after the condemnation to death; for if this is not the punishment of man but nature, there are no sins. In truth, if there is no departure from that state in which man was so made by nature that he cannot become better, he does what he ought when he does these things. If, however, man were good, he would be otherwise; but because he is as he is now, he is not good and he

25 *Ibid.* 2.20.54.
26 *Ibid.*
27 Cf. *Retr.* 1.8.3; 2.68.
28 Cf. *On Free Choice* 3.18.50.
29 Cf. 1 Tim. 1.13.
30 Cf. Ps. 24.7.
31 Cf. Rom. 7.15; 7.19.
32 Cf. Rom. 7.18.
33 Cf. Gal. 5.17.

does not have the power to be good, either because he does not see what kind of man he ought to be, or he sees and does not have the strength to be what he sees he ought to be. Who doubts that this is a punishment? Moreover, every punishment, if it is just, is punishment for sin and is called a penalty. But if the punishment is unjust—since no one doubts that it is punishment—it was imposed on man by some unjust ruler. Yet, because it would be folly to doubt the omnipotence and justice of God, this punishment is just and is exacted for some sin. For no unjust ruler could either have taken man away, so to speak, without God's knowledge, or wrested him away against His will, as though He were the weaker, by terrorizing or confusing Him, in order to torture him by an unjust punishment. It follows, therefore, that this just punishment comes from man's condemnation."[34]

And in another place, I said: "To approve the false instead of the true so that one errs against his will, and to be unable to refrain from carnal acts because of the resisting and tormenting pain of the bond of the flesh, are not the nature of man as created but the punishment of man condemned. When we speak, then, of a will to act rightly, we are speaking, to be sure, of that will with which man was created."[35]

(6) Observe how long before the Pelagian heresy had come into existence we spoke as though we were already speaking against them. For while all good things, that is, the great and the intermediate and the least, were said to come from God, the free choice of the will is, in truth, found among the intermediate goods, because, indeed, we can use it wrongly; but yet it is such that without it we cannot live rightly. The good use of this choice, moreover, is virtue which is found among the great goods which no one can use wrongly. And because all good things, as was said—the great, the intermediate, and the least—are from God, it follows that the good use of free will, which is virtue, is also from God and is

34 Cf. *On Free Choice* 3.18.51.
35 *Ibid.* 3.18.52.

numbered among the great goods. Then, the question was taken up: from what misery, justly imposed on sinners, is man freed by the grace of God because man could fall of his own will, that is, by free choice, but could not also rise?[36] The ignorance and difficulty which every man experiences from the beginning of his existence are involved with this misery of just condemnation, and no one is freed from this evil except by the grace of God. The Pelagians, who deny original sin, refuse to believe that this misery comes from a just condemnation. However, even if ignorance and difficulty belonged to man's primordial state, in that event God should not be blamed but praised, as we argued in the same third book.[37]

This disputation is to be considered as directed against the Manichaeans, who do not accept the Scripture of the Old Testament, where an account of original sin[38] is given, and who maintain, with detestable arrogance, that what is read about it in the Apostolic writings was interpolated by corrupters of the Scriptures[39] as though it had not been said by the Apostles themselves. Against the Pelagians, on the other hand, we must defend what the two Testaments teach, for they profess to accept both.

This work begins thus: "Tell me, I beg you, whether God is the author of evil."

NOTE. In both this dialogue, *On Free Choice,* and the work discussed in the previous chapter, *On the Quantity of the Soul,* Augustine and Evodius are the sole participants. In his *Retractations* (1.8.1), Augustine states that the first of these works was begun during his stay in Rome, and that the second and third books were completed in Africa after he was ordained a priest at Hippo Regius. The exact year it was finished cannot be determined though some suggest 395. We can be certain that it was published by 396, the year the author wrote a letter addressed to Paulinus of Nola and Therasia, *Letter* 31,

36 *Ibid.* 2.19.50; 2.20.54.
37 *Ibid.* 3.20.58; 3.22.64-65.
38 Cf. *On Heresies* 46; *Confessions* 9.4.8.
39 Cf. *Confessions* 5.11.21.

in which he mentions that he has sent a copy of this treatise to the former.

Saint Augustine's confidence in this work is evinced by his references to it in later works and by letters in which he either recommends its reading or comments on it without criticism. In his treatise directed against Secundinus, the Manichaean (*Against Secundinus, the Manichaean* 11, 405-406 A.D.; cf. *Retractations* 2.36), he suggests that Secundinus read it and tells him that he can find a copy at Nola in Campania in Paulinus' possession. In letters to Marcellinus (*Letter* 143, 412 A.D.), to Evodius where he reminds him of the two dialogues mentioned above (*Letter* 162, 414 A.D.), and to Jerome (*Letter* 166, 415 A.D.), he intimates his approval of the views expressed in this treatise. In a later work composed shortly before his death and after the unfinished *Retractations*, namely, *On the Gift of Perseverance* (*De dono perseverantiae*, 428/429 A.D.), he refers to remarks made by him concerning the treatise, *On Free Choice*, in the *Retractations* (1.8.2 and 1.8.6), and suggests the reading of it to the persons to whom he addressed *On the Gift of Perseverance*, and makes it clear that his earlier views have not changed (cf. *On the Gift of Perseverance* 11-12). Of further interest in the *Retractations* are the quoted passages used by the Pelagians to support their views which, Augustine points out, are, in truth, opposed to their teachings and in accordance with his own treatment of grace in later years.

Augustine wrote this work to refute the Manichaean denial that evil is due to free choice of will. The main theme of this treatise is the discussion of the important problem of evil—a pivotal one in theology—in relation to the existence of an omnipotent and good God. This argument alone entitles it to an important place among Augustine's works. Secondly, his argument for the existence of God based on reason alone, and not on reason and faith (revelation), involving as it does profound philosophical questions, is an added reason for numbering this work among the author's most important writings, both from a theological and a philosophical point of view. (Cf. the Introduction 13-14 to the translation of this treatise by Dom Mark Pontifex, ACW 22.)

Chapter 9

TWO BOOKS ON GENESIS, AGAINST THE MANICHAEANS

(De Genesi adversus Manicheos libri duo)

(1) After I was now settled in Africa, I wrote two books, *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans.* Although whatever I discussed in earlier books in which I showed that God is the supreme Good and the unchangeable Creator of all changeable natures and that no nature or substance, insofar as it is a nature and substance, is an evil, was intentionally directed against the Manichaeans,[1] yet these two books very manifestly were published against them in defense of the Old Law which they attack with the vehement intensity of frenzied error.[2] The first book begins from the words: "In the beginning God made heaven and earth"[3] and continues up to the passage when seven days have passed where we read that God rested on the seventh day.[4] The second book begins from the words: "This book of the creation of the heaven and the earth"[5] and covers up to the place when Adam and his wife were driven from Paradise[6] and a guard was placed over the tree of life.[7] Then, at the end of this book, I contrast the error of the Manichaeans with the creed of Catholic truth, including briefly and clearly what they hold and what we hold.

(2) But the new Pelagian heretics are not to think that what I said was said in agreement with them, namely: "This light, however, does not nourish the eyes of irrational birds but the pure hearts of those who believe in God and turn

1 Cf. *On Free Choice; Retr.* 1.8.
2 Cf. *On Heresies* 46.
3 Cf. Gen. 1.1.
4 Cf. *ibid.* 2.2.
5 Cf. *ibid.* 2.4.
6 Cf. *ibid.* 3.23.
7 Cf. *ibid.* 3.23-24.

from the love of visible and temporal things to the fulfillment of His precepts; all have this in their power if they will."[8] Indeed, it is entirely true that all men have this in their power if they will; but "the will is made ready by God"[9] and is strengthened by the gift of charity to such a degree that they have it in their power. This was not said here, then, because it was not pertinent to the question under discussion.

But as to the fact that one reads there, that the blessing of the Lord concerning which the following was said: "Increase and multiply,"[10] should be believed to have been transformed into carnal fertility after *the* sin,[11] if one cannot understand that this was said only in the sense that men would not have had children if men had not sinned, I entirely disapprove.

It does not, indeed, follow that an allegorical interpretation alone is warranted of what is said in the Book of Genesis: green herbs and fruit-bearing trees are given as food to every kind of beast and to all birds and to all serpents[12] because there are four-footed beasts and fowls of the air that seem to live on flesh alone.[13] Perhaps they could also have been fed by men on the fruits of the earth if, in reward for an obedience whereby they served God without any iniquity, they had deserved to have all beasts and birds entirely subservient to them.

Moreover, the manner in which I spoke of the people of Israel could be disturbing: "Even now that people, in the sea of the people of God, so to speak, by corporeal circumcision and sacrifices obeyed the law";[14] for it was not possible for the people of Israel to offer sacrifice in the midst of the Gentiles, just as, even at the present time, we see that they

8 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.3.6.
9 Cf. Prov. 8.35 according to the Septuagint.
10 Cf. Gen. 1.28.
11 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.19.30.
12 Cf. Gen. 1.29-30.
13 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.20.31.
14 Cf. *ibid.* 1.23.40.

have remained without sacrifices,[15] unless, perchance, the fact that they immolate a lamb during the Passover be counted as sacrifice.

(3) In the second book also, my statement that the term *food* could signify life[16]—the manuscripts of a more correct translation do not have *food* but *hay*—does not seem to have been stated aptly enough, for the term *hay* does not correspond to the meaning *life* in the same way as the term *food*.

Moreover, I do not seem to have correctly called prophetic[17] the words in this passage: "Why is earth and ashes proud?"[18] for the book in which this is read is not the work of one of whom we can be certain that he should be called a prophet.

When I explained[19] the passage: "God breathed into his face the breath of life and man became a live soul or a living soul,"[20] I did not understand the Apostle as he wished to be understood when he used testimony from Genesis saying: "The first man, Adam, became a living soul."[21] For the Apostle used this testimony in order to prove that the body is animated;[22] I thought, however, that from this, one could prove that, in the beginning, the entire man, not his body alone, was created animated.

Moreover, I said: "Sins harm only the nature of him who commits them."[23] I said this because he who harms a just man does not really harm him since he increases his "reward in heaven";[24] by sinning, however, he really harms himself, since, because of the very will to harm, he will receive the harm that he has done. The Pelagians, of course, can ascribe this opinion to their belief and, accordingly, can say that the

15 Cf. *Against a Letter of Petilian* 2.37.87 *(Retr.* 2.51); Jerome, *Letter* 52; Deut. 16.6.
16 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.3.4.
17 *Ibid.* 2.5.6.
18 Cf. Ecclus. (Sir.) 10.9.
19 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.8.10.
20 Cf. Gen. 2.7.
21 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.45.
22 That is, has a soul.
23 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.29.43.
24 Cf. Matt. 5.12; Luke 6.23.

sins of another have not harmed infants on the ground that I said: "Sins harm only the nature of him who commits them." Hence, they do not realize that infants, who assuredly possess human nature, inherit original sin because in the first men human nature has sinned, and for this reason, "Sins harm only the nature of him who commits them." Indeed, "by one man" in whom all have sinned, "sin entered into the world."[25] For I did not say, "only the *man*," but I said: "Sins harm only the *nature* of him who commits them."

Likewise, they[26] can seek a like subterfuge in a statement I made a short time afterwards: "There is no natural evil,"[27] if this statement is not applied to nature as it was created in the beginning without sin. For this is truly and properly called the nature of man. However, we used the word in a transferred sense just as we, indeed, designate the nature of man at birth, according to the meaning of the Apostle when he said: "For we also once were by nature children of wrath even as the rest."[28]

This work begins thus: "If the Manichaeans should choose those whom they could deceive."

NOTE. From Rome, where at Eastertime 387, he had resided after his baptism in Milan, St. Augustine returned to Africa, probably at the end of 388. He tells us that when he was settled there, ". . . *in Africa constitutus*," (presumably after he and a few associates had established a monastic community at his birthplace, Tagaste), he wrote two books, *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans,* in defense of the Old Law against the Manichaeans who were vehemently attacking it, and that in this work, he contrasted the Manichaean error and Catholic truth (cf. *Retr.* 1.9.1). This commentary on the first three books of Genesis, written about 389, answers the objections of the Manichaeans to the biblical account of creation.

This exegetical work is the first of five treatises completed against the Manichaeans by Augustine before his ordination. Though, for the most part, in it Augustine devoted his attention

25 Cf. Rom. 5.12.
26 The Pelagians.
27 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 2.29.43.
28 Cf. Eph. 2.3.

to the main theme mentioned above, he discussed the problem of evil as he did in an earlier work, *On Free Choice* (cf. *ibid.* 1.8), and reasserted that the source of sin is found in the will. In the *Retractations* (1.9.2), he adds the Scriptural words that the will "is made ready by God" (Prov. 8.35, according to the Septuagint). More consideration, however, is given in the present treatise than in his work, *On Free Choice,* to grace, "the light" that turns men of pure heart to God and away from the temporal concerns of this world.

Furthermore, Augustine in his *Retractations* expresses dissatisfaction with certain passages of this commentary; these he corrects, or criticizes, or expands as the case may be. Three of them are elaborated on in anticipation of their misuse by the Pelagians in support of their own beliefs. He concedes that they can do this with some justification. To offset this, he explains his statements in great detail. We may say, then, that exegetical amplification characterizes this chapter of the *Retractations.*

Later, Augustine comments on his purely allegorical interpretation of Genesis in this work and starts, but does not complete, a second work on the literal meaning of Genesis entitled *One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* 393/394 (cf. *Retractations* 1.17.1). His most important work on these first chapters of Genesis, *Twelve Books on the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* the writing of which extended from about 401-415, will be discussed below (2.50 NOTE).

Chapter 10

SIX BOOKS ON MUSIC

(De musica libri sex)

(1) Next, as I mentioned above,[1] I wrote six books *On Music.* The sixth of these became especially well known because in it a subject worthy of investigation was considered, namely, how, from corporeal and spiritual but changeable numbers, one comes to the knowledge of unchangeable numbers which are already in unchangeable truth itself, and

1 Cf. *Retr.* 1.4.4; 1.5.3.

how, in this way, "the invisible attributes" of God, "being understood through the things that are made, are clearly seen."[2] For those who do not have the power, and nevertheless, "live by faith in Christ"[3] acquire a perception of these things more assuredly and more happily after this life; but if the faith of Christ who is "the one mediator of God and man,"[4] be wanting to those who have the power, they perish with all their wisdom.

(2) A statement I made in this book: "For bodies are the better to the extent that they are more harmonious by reason of such numbers. But the soul is made better through lack of these numbers it receives through the body when it turns away from the carnal senses and is changed by the divine numbers of wisdom,"[5] should not be interpreted to mean that there will not be corporeal numbers in incorruptible and spiritual bodies when they will be more beautiful and more lovely, or that the soul, when perfect, will no longer be sensible to these numbers because it is made better here below by being deprived of them. For here there is need to turn itself away from carnal senses to grasp the intelligible things because it is weak and less capable of devoting its attention to both at the same time. The soul should now shun enticements to these corporeal things as long as it can be attracted to shameful pleasures. Then, however, it will be firm and perfect so that it will not be turned from the contemplation of wisdom by corporeal numbers, and will so perceive them that it will not be enticed by them nor be made better by lacking them; rather it will be so good and righteous that [these numbers] can neither lie hidden nor take possession of it.

(3) Likewise, from what I said: "This health will be most sound and certain when this body will be restored to its pristine stability, in its own fixed time and order,"[6] it should

2 Cf. Rom. 1.20.
3 Cf. Rom. 1.7; Gal. 3.11; Heb. 10.38.
4 Cf. I Tim. 2.5.
5 Cf. *On Music* 6.4.7.
6 *Ibid.* 6.5.13.

not be understood as meaning that, after the resurrection, bodies will not be better than were those of the first men in paradise, for now these bodies do not have to be nourished by the bodily nourishments with which those of the first men were nourished. But pristine stability should be understood only to mean that these bodies will not suffer any illness just as those bodies before *the* sin could not suffer any maladies.

(4) In another place, I say: "The love of this world is more burdensome. For the soul does not find what it seeks in it, that is, constancy and eternity, since the lowest beauty is ended with the passing of things, and what in it imitates constancy is transmitted through the soul by the supreme God, since the beauty that is changeable only in time is prior to that limited by time and place."[7] If these words can be interpreted in this way, namely, that the lowest beauty is undersood to be found only in the bodies of men and of all animate beings with whom we live by bodily sense, clear reason supports this. For constancy is imitated in this beauty because the same bodies retain their structure, insofar as they remain, but the fact that they do is transmitted in it by the supreme God through the soul. For the soul keeps this structure from being broken up and dissolved, as we see happens in the bodies of animate beings after the soul departs.[8] But if this same beauty be understood as applying to all bodies, this opinion compels one to believe that this world itself is an animate being[9] so that what in it imitates constancy is also transmitted to it through the soul by the supreme God. But that this world is an animate being, as Plato and numerous other philosophers thought,[10] I have not been able to investigate by solid reasoning, nor have I found that I accept this idea on the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. Hence, some-

7 *Ibid.* 6.14.44.
8 Cf. *Confessions* 10.34.53.
9 Cf. *On the City of God* 7.23, where Augustine discusses Varro's views.
10 Cf. Plato, *Timaeus* 30B; also Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.9.23, 1.10.24, 1.23.62-1.24.68, 2.8.21-22, 2.11.30-2.12.32.

thing said by me, too, in the book, *On the Immortality of the Soul*,[11] which can be interpreted in this way, I have noted was said rashly[12]—not because I maintain that this is false, but because I do not understand that it is true that the world is an animate being. For, assuredly, I do not doubt that it must be firmly maintained that this world is not God for us, whether it has any soul or no soul, because if it has a soul, He who created it is "our God";[13] but if it is not animated, it cannot be the God of anyone—much less ours. Yet that there is a spiritual and life-giving power, even if the world is not an animate being, and that this power assists God to adorn and govern the world in the holy angels even if not understood by them, is most correctly believed. Moreover, by the name of holy angels, I should have designated at that time every holy spiritual creature engaged in the secret and hidden service of God. However, Holy Scripture is not accustomed to indicate the angelic spirits by the name of souls. Consequently, with regard to what I said in this passage which is near the end of this book: "The rational and intellectual numbers of the blessed and saintly souls, without interference from any nature, transmit the law of God itself, without which a leaf does not fall from a tree and by which our hairs are numbered,[14] even to the laws of earth and hell,"[15] I do not see how the expression, "souls," can possibly be verified according to the Sacred Scriptures, since here I wished the term to apply exclusively to the holy angels[16] for I do not recall that I ever read in the Sacred canonical Scriptures that angels have souls.

This book begins as follows: "For an almost sufficiently long time."

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11 *On the Immortality of the Soul* 15.24 (cf. *Retr.* 1.5).
12 Cf. *Retr.* 1.5.3.
13 Cf. Ps. 45.2.
14 Cf. Ps. 1.3; Isa. 34.4, 64.6; Luke 12.7; Matt. 10.30.
15 Cf. *On Music* 6.17.58.
16 Cf. *Retr.* 1.15.2.

NOTE. From a passage in the *Retractations* (1.5), added to his review of the dialogue, *On the Immortality of the Soul,* we learn from Augustine that, just prior to his baptism (387), he had attempted to write books on the liberal disciplines with a desire to lead to things incorporeal through things corporeal; that he succeeded in completing only the book, *On Grammar (De grammatica)* and six books on music *(De musica);* and that he wrote only the beginnings of the projected works on the other disciplines, that is, on dialectic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, and philosophy, extant then but lost at a later time (he believed, however, that they were in the hands of certain persons). Furthermore, he tells us that the books *On Music* were begun at Milan after his baptism. From this indeterminate evidence, different conclusions are reached about the dates of the composition of *On Music,* for example, 387-391 (de Labriolle), 387-389 (Bourke), 387-391 (Portalié).

According to Augustine, the sixth book of this work, the only one he reviews in his *Retractations,* is especially well known because of the value of the subject matter, namely, how, through investigation, a knowledge of the invisible things of God becomes visible through created things (cf. *Retractations* 1.10.1; Rom. 1.20). In a letter he wrote to Bishop Memorius about seventeen years later (*Letter* 101, *ca.* 408 or 409 A.D.), this book is the only one he promises to send to the addressee at once because, since the manuscript was misplaced, he cannot comply with Memorius' request for the six books. The first five, he says, are not easy to understand without help (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

In the course of his comparatively long review in the *Retractations* of the sixth book of the present work, *On Music,* Augustine cites several passages. Some of these he expounds to avoid misinterpretation, some he clarifies, some he corrects, and one he, in self-reprimand, says contains a rash statement.

Chapter 11

ONE BOOK ON THE TEACHER

(De magistro liber unus)

At the same time,[1] I wrote a book whose title is *On the Teacher*.[2] In this, there is a discussion, an investigation, and the discovery that there is no teacher who teaches man knowledge except God, according to what, in truth, is written in the Gospel: "One is your Master, the Christ."[3]

This book begins thus: "What do we seem to you to want to accomplish when we speak?"

NOTE. The record of a dialogue between Augustine and his son, Adeodatus, in the latter's sixteenth year, entitled *On the Teacher,* is summarized in the *Retractations* immediately after Augustine's review of the treatise *On Music* and just before that *On the True Religion,* written about 389 or 390. It was probably published about 389. Adeodatus is thought to have died shortly afterwards, perhaps within the next year.

Undoubtedly, this conversation between himself and his son had special significance for Augustine. In an earlier work composed in 386, *On the Happy Life,* he had spoken (1.6) of Adeodatus' promising talent, and later in his *Confessions* (9.6.14), composed 397/398-400/401, after mentioning this discussion between Adeodatus and himself, he praises the youth's ability and intelligence. The part contributed by Adeodatus to the present dialectical and rhetorical exercise doubtless contributed to Augustine's estimate of the acumen of his son.

In the passage of the *Confessions* just referred to, Augustine attests that the views of Adeodatus expressed in the present work are the latter's own. We may infer that he recalled with great satisfacttion this disputation on teaching and learning as related to language, because Adeodatus, in the concluding words of this dialogue, shows that he, beyond doubt, has

1 That is, during the same period in which the two preceding works, *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* (*Retr.* 1.9) and *On Music* (*Retr.* 1.10), were composed.

2 Cf. *Confessions* 9.6.14.

3 Cf. Matt. 23.10.

achieved its purpose, namely, the conviction that the only teacher who teaches man knowledge is God: "Moreover, as to whether what is said is true, He alone teaches who, when He spoke eternally, reminded us that He dwells within us. I shall now, with His help, love Him the more ardently, the more I progress in virtue" (*On the Teacher* 14.46; ACW 9.186).

In this work, in addition to, or rather in connection with, Augustine's theory of knowledge, there is the doctrine of divine illumination, "the interior teacher," "the interior light," referred to previously (*Retractations* 1.7 NOTE).

Apparently, Augustine was satisfied with the points as presented by himself and his son in this dialogue, for in his brief treatment of this work in the *Retractations*, he mentions only the time of its composition, its theme, and the conclusion reached, namely, "There is no teacher who teaches except God."

Chapter 12

ONE BOOK ON THE TRUE RELIGION

(De vera religione liber unus)

(1) At this time also I wrote a book, *On the True Religion,* in which I argued repeatedly and lengthily that the one true God—that is, the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is to be worshiped by the true religion, declaring also the greatness of that mercy of His through which, by a temporal dispensation, the Christian religion, which is the true religion, has been given to man; and it is man's obligation to be inclined, by a kind of delight, to this same worship of God. This book, however, speaks especially against the two natures of the Manichaeans.

(2) In a certain place in this book, I say: "Let it be manifest and clear to you that there could have been no error in religion if the soul had not worshiped a soul, a body, or its own phantasms instead of its God."[1] I used "soul" here

1 Cf. *On the True Religion* 10.18.

to mean every incorporeal creature; I was not speaking according to the usage of the Scriptures which, when they do not use the word [soul] figuratively, apparently intend that only the soul, whereby living mortal beings live, be understood, among which are men also, inasmuch as they are mortal. But a little later, I expressed the same meaning better and briefly when I said: "Let us not, therefore, serve the creature rather than the Creator,[2] nor be vain in our thoughts;[3] this, indeed, is true religion."[4] Since, by one term, I indicated both creatures, that is, the spiritual and the corporeal, what I said first, "or its phantasms," remains valid because of what I have said here: "Let us not be vain in our thoughts."

(3) Again, when I said: "In our times, this is the Christian religion which to know and follow is most secure and most certain salvation,"[5] I did so with reference to the name only, not to the thing itself of which this is only the name. For what is now called the Christian religion existed even among the ancients and was not lacking from the beginning of the human race until "Christ came in the flesh."[6] From that time, true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian. For, after the Resurrection and the Ascension into heaven, when the disciples had begun to preach Him and many believed, "the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch," as is written.[7] For this reason, I said: "In our times, this is the Christian religion," not because it did not exist in former times, but because it had received this name in later times.

(4) In another place, I say: "Turn your attention, then, to what follows as diligently and devoutly as you can: for God helps such men."[8] This is not to be understood as though God helps such men only, for He also helps those who are

2 Cf. Rom. 1.25.
3 Cf. Rom. 1.21.
4 Cf. *On the True Religion* 10.19.
5 *Ibid.*
6 Cf. 1 John 4.2; 2 John 1.7.
7 Cf. Acts 11.26.
8 Cf. *On the True Religion* 10.20.

not such to become such, that is, to seek diligently and devoutly; moreover, He helps such men to find.[9] And again, in another place, I say: "Then the consequence will be that after the death of the body which we owe to the first sin, in its own time and order, this body will be restored to its pristine stability."[10] This should be interpreted as follows: indeed, the pristine stability, which we lost by sinning, had so great felicity that it did not fall into the weakness of old age. To this pristine stability, therefore, this body will be restored at the resurrection of the dead. It will, however, have more: it will not be sustained by temporal nutrition, but "will be brought to life in the spirit"[11] alone when it will rise "into a life-giving spirit"[12] since, at that time, it will, indeed, be spiritual. That body, however, although not destined to die if man had not sinned, was first created animated, that is, "into a living soul."[13]

(5) And in another place, I say: "Sin is so voluntary an evil that it is by no means sin if it is not voluntary."[14] This explanation may seem false, but if it is examined diligently, it will be found to be very true. For, in truth, we should consider sin only what is sin, not what is, indeed, the penalty for sin, as I pointed out above when I was treating certain passages from the third book of *On Free Choice*.[15] Even those sins which are not unjustly called involuntary, because they are committed by those who are ignorant or constrained, cannot be committed entirely without the will, since, in truth, he who sins through ignorance in any case sins voluntarily, because he thinks he should do something that should not be done. He who does not do what he wills because "the flesh lusts against the spirit,"[16] certainly lusts without the will and,

9 Cf. 2 Par. 26.7; Ps. 53.6.
10 Cf. *On the True Religion* 12.25.
11 Cf. 1 Peter 3.18.
12 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.45.
13 Cf. Gen. 2.7.
14 Cf. *On the True Religion* 14.27.
15 Cf. *Retr.* 1.8.5.
16 Cf. Gal. 5.17.

therefore, does not do what he wills. If, however, he is overcome, he yields to concupiscence voluntarily, and, therefore, does only what he wills, free, so to speak, "as regards justice" and "a slave of sin."[17] And what is called original sin in infants, for they do not as yet use free choice of the will, is not improperly called voluntary also, because, inherited from man's first evil will, it has become, in a certain sense, hereditary. Consequently, what I said is not incorrect: "Sin is so voluntary an evil that it is by no means sin if it is not voluntary."[18] By the grace of God, then, not only is the guilt of all past sins removed in those "who are baptized in Christ,"[19] for this is accomplished by the spirit of regeneration; but also in adults, "the will" itself is purified and "prepared" by the Lord, which, in this case, is accomplished "by the spirit of faith"[20] and of charity.

(6) In another place, when I said the following about our Lord Jesus Christ: "He did nothing by force, but everything by persuasion and admonition,"[21] I forgot that He cast out the sellers and buyers from the temple by flogging.[22] But what does this matter and of what importance is it, although He also cast out demons from men against their will, not by persuasive words, but by force of His power?[23]

In another place, likewise, I said: "They are to be followed first who say that there is one supreme Being and He alone is to be worshiped. If truth does not shine forth in them, then we must go elsewhere."[24] This may seem to indicate that I doubted the truth of this religion. But I spoke, however, in a way adapted to the one to whom I was writing, for I said: "If the truth does not shine forth in them," not because I doubted that it would shine forth in them, just as the Apostle

17 Cf. Rom. 6.20; 6.17.
18 Cf. *On the True Religion* 14.27.
19 Cf. Rom. 6.3.
20 Cf. 2 Cor. 4.13.
21 Cf. *On the True Religion* 16.31.
22 Cf. Mark 11.15; Matt. 21.12; Luke 19.45.
23 Cf. Matt. 9.32-33; Mark 1.34, 5.13; Luke 4.35.
24 Cf. *On the True Religion* 25.46.

said: "If Christ has not risen,"[25] certainly, not because he doubted that He has risen.

(7) Likewise, this statement of mine is indeed true: "These miracles were not allowed to last until our times lest the soul ever seek visible things and the human race grow cold because of familiarity with those things whose novelty enkindled it."[26] For not even now, when a hand is laid on the baptized, do they receive the Holy Spirit in such a way that they speak with the tongues of all nations;[27] nor are the sick now healed by the passing shadow of the preachers of Christ.[28] Even though such things happened at that time, manifestly these ceased later. But what I said is not to be so interpreted that no miracles are believed to be performed in the name of Christ at the present time. For, when I wrote that book, I myself had recently learned that a blind man had been restored to sight in Milan near the bodies of the martyrs in that very city,[29] and I knew about some others, so numerous even in these times, that we cannot know about all of them nor enumerate those we know.[30]

(8) And in another place, I said: "As the Apostle says, 'All order is from God.' "[31] The Apostle did not use these identical words although the meaning seems to be the same, for he says: "But those [authorities] which exist, have been appointed by God."[32]

And in another place, I said: "In a word, let no one deceive us; whatever is rightly censured is rejected by comparison with what is better."[33] This was said about substances and natures—since the discussion was about them—not about good acts and sins.

25 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.14.
26 Cf. *On the True Religion* 25.47.
27 Cf. Acts 2.4; 10.45-46.
28 Cf. Acts 5.15.
29 Cf. Ambrose, *Letter* 22; *Confessions* 9.7.16; *On the City of God* 22.8; *Sermon* 286.5.
30 Cf. *On the City of God* 22.8.
31 Cf. *On the True Religion* 41.77.
32 Cf. Rom. 13.1.
33 Cf. *On the True Religion* 41.78.

And again, in another place, I said: "But, in truth, man is not to be loved by man as brothers according to the flesh are loved, or sons or spouses or certain relatives or neighbors or fellow citizens; for love such as this is, indeed, temporal. For we would not have any such relationships as are connected with birth and death if our nature, by abiding in the precepts and image of God, had not been relegated to this corruption."[34] I certainly disapprove of this view which I have already disapproved of above in dealing with the first book of *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans*.[35] For this leads to the belief that the first spouses would not have begotten offspring if they had not sinned, as though it were necessary that such offspring should be born to die if they were begotten of the coition of man and woman. For I had not yet seen that it was possible that those not destined to die might be born of those not destined to die, if human nature were not changed for the worse by that great sin. Therefore, if happiness and fecundity had remained in both parents and children, men would be born, not to succeed parents destined to die, but to reign with living parents, up to the certain number of saints whom "God had predestined."[36] Consequently, there would have been relatives and kindred even if no one had sinned and no one had died.

(9) Likewise, in another place, I said: "By striving toward one God and binding [*religantes*], from which it is believed *religion* is derived, our souls to Him alone, let us avoid all superstition."[37] The account which was given in these words of mine for the origin of the word "religion" was the one more satisfactory to me; for I am not unaware that Latin writers have proposed another derivation of this word, namely, that it has been called "religion" because it means

34 *Ibid.* 46.88.
35 Cf. *Retr.* 1.9.3.
36 Cf. Rom. 8.28; 1 Cor. 2.7; Eph. 1.5, 1.11.
37 Cf. *On the True Religion* 55.111. On Augustine's definition of "religion," cf. D. J. Kavanagh, *Answer to the Skeptics* (trans. of *Contra Academicos*), FC 5.182 n. 2.

"retraced" [or "re-read"] *(religitur)*.[38] This word is a compound of *legere* ("pick out") as is *eligere* ("select"), as, in Latin, *religere* seems to have the same meaning as *eligere*.[39]

This work begins thus: "Since the way of the good and happy life . . . entirely. . ."

NOTE. *On the True Religion*, the treatise dealt with in this chapter, and the book *On the Teacher* were written by Augustine during the same period (cf. *Retractations, supra*), that is, in 389 or 390, while he and a few companions were living in monastic seclusion at Tagaste. It was composed to fulfill a promise made to Romanianus, a patron and friend, to whom it is addressed (cf. *On the True Religion* 7.12). About this time, too, in a letter to this same friend, Augustine states that he has written something on the Catholic religion which he wants to send to him before his own arrival—if paper holds out! (cf. *Letter* 15, *ca.* 390). In a letter to Paulinus some five years later (*Letter* 27, *ca.* 395), Augustine informs his correspondent that the carrier of this missive is Romanianus whose "name is in the book *On Religion* which Your Holiness has read with pleasure, as you have said in your letters." Several years later, he suggested the reading of this work to Evodius as a help to him in answering his own queries (cf. *Letter* 162, *ca.* 414).

According to Augustine *(Retractations* 1.12.1), this apologetical work is "especially against the two natures of the Manichaeans," and contains long arguments on the worship of the one true God by the true religion, the Christian religion *(ibid.)*.

This treatise is Augustine's fifth work against the Manichaean sect, in which he was an auditor for nine years. Paulinus of Nola refers to it and the other four collectively in these words: "With this Pentateuch of yours, you have armed me well against the Manichaeans" (in a letter included as *Letter* 25 in the corpus of Augustine's correspondence and written in 394). *On the True Religion* also contains arguments against skeptics and other unbelievers, as well as a treatment of Catholic doctrine and a discussion of moral evil and free choice of the will. It is considered a masterpiece in apologetics.

Of the passages from this treatise critically examined by Augustine in his *Retractations*, only one is strongly disapproved of: his statement that there is involvement in sin in the begetting of offspring, an opinion previously condemned by him in his review of *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* (cf. *Re-*

38 Cf. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.28.72.
39 Cf. *On the City of God* 10.3.1.

tractations 1.9.2). The other passages are either expounded in detail or explained without adverse criticism. Obviously, Augustine was satisfied, on the whole, with his treatment of the subject dealt with in this treatise, *On the True Religion,* and with his explanation of the etymology of the word *religion* (*ibid.* 1.12.9).

Chapter 13

ONE BOOK ON THE ADVANTAGE OF BELIEVING

(De utilitate credendi liber unus)

(1) At this time as a priest in Hippo Regius, I wrote a book, *On the Advantage of Believing,* to a friend of mine who, deceived by the Manichaeans, I knew was still in the grip of this error and was mocking the discipline of the Catholic faith on the ground that men were ordered to believe, but were not taught by most solid reason what the truth was.

In this book, I said: "And yet in these precepts and commands of the Law whose observance by Christians is not lawful now—such as the Sabbath or Circumcision or Sacrifices and anything of this kind—such great mysteries are contained that every devout person understands that nothing is more dangerous than to take what is there literally, that is, verbatim, yet nothing more salutary than what is 'revealed in the spirit.'[1] Hence, the Apostle's statement: 'The letter kills, but the spirit gives life.' "[2-3] Yet I have explained these words of the Apostle Paul in another way and, as it seems to me, or rather as it appears from the facts themselves, in a much more appropriate way in that book which is entitled *On the Spirit and the Letter,*[4] although the aforementioned meaning is not to be rejected.

1 Cf. Eph. 3.5.
2 Cf. *On the Advantage of Believing* 3.9.
3 2 Cor. 3.6.
4 Cf. *On the Spirit and the Letter* 4.6, 5.7; cf. *Retr.* 2.63.

(2) Likewise, I said: "For there are two [classes of] persons in religion deserving of praise: one includes those who have already found, whom, in truth, one must consider most happy; the other includes those who are seeking most zealously and most rightly. The first, then, are already in actual possession; the second, on the way by which, nevertheless, they will most surely arrive."[5] If by these words of mine, they who have already found, who, we have said, are now in actual possession, are understood to be most happy in the sense that they are entirely happy, not in this life, but will be in that life for which we hope and toward which we tend by the way of faith, this interpretation is without error. For they who are now in that place where we desire to arrive by seeking and believing,[6] that is, by holding fast to the way of faith, are to be judged to have found what is to be sought. If, however, they are considered entirely happy in this life, either now or in the past, I do not think this is true, not because in this life no truth at all can be found that can be discerned by the mind[7] and not believed by faith, but because it is so limited, whatever it is, that it does not make men entirely happy. For what the Apostle says: "We see now through a mirror in an obscure manner," and, "Now I know in part,"[8] is not perceived by the mind in part only—it is clearly perceived—yet it does not make men most happy. What he says, in truth, makes them most happy: "But then face to face," and, "Then I shall know even as I have been known."[9] Those who have discovered this must be said to be in possession of the happiness whither the way of faith, to which we are holding, leads and whither we desire to arrive by believing. But who those entirely happy men are who are already in possession of that whither this way leads, is an important question. Certainly, there is no doubt that the holy angels are

5 Cf. *On the Advantage of Believing* 11.25.
6 Cf. Matt. 7.7; Luke 11.9.
7 Cf. Cicero, *Academics* 2.59; 2.66.
8 Cf. 1 Cor. 13.12.
9 *Ibid.*

there. But it is rightly a matter of doubt whether one could say that holy men who have died are now in possession of it. For they have, indeed, been divested of the corruptible body by which the soul is pressed down,[10] but they, too, still await "the redemption of their body"[11] and "their flesh rests in hope,"[12] but does not as yet shine with the incorruptibility that is to come. However, this is not the place to inquire more fully whether, on this account, they do not have all that is needed "for the contemplation" of truth[13] with the eyes of the heart just as was said "face to face."[14] In like manner, we ought to apply the following statement of mine to the same happiness: "For the knowledge of great and honorable or even divine things constitutes complete happiness."[15] For in this life, knowledge, however extensive, does not constitute complete happiness, because that part of it which is unknown is by far incomparably greater.

(3) And what I said: "There is a great difference between whether a thing is grasped by the definitive reasoning of the mind, which we call understanding, or is beneficially entrusted to posterity for belief orally or in writing"; and (shortly afterwards): "What we understand, then, we owe to reason, what we believe to authority,"[16] this should not be so interpreted that, in more familiar conversation, we should be afraid to say that we know we believe on the authority of competent witnesses. In truth, when we speak precisely, we mean that we know only what we grasp with the sound reason of mind. But when we use words better suited to common usage, as, indeed, Holy Scripture uses them, we should not hesitate to say that we know both what we perceive with our bodily senses and what we believe on the authority

10 Cf. Wisd. 9.15.
11 Cf. Rom. 8.23.
12 Cf. Acts 2.26.
13 Cf. Eccles. 2.12.
14 Cf. 1 Cor. 13.12.
15 Cf. *On the Advantage of Believing* 11.25.
16 *Ibid.*

of trustworthy witnesses, provided, however, that we understand the difference between them.

(4) Also what I said: "No one doubts that men in general are either foolish or wise,"[17] may seem contrary to what is read in the third book of *On Free Choice:* "As though, in truth, human nature does not admit an intermediary state between folly and wisdom."[18] This last, however, was said at a point at which I was inquiring whether the first man was created wise or foolish or neither, since we, by no means, could call foolish one who was created without a fault—for folly is a serious fault—and it was not sufficiently clear in what sense we could call wise a man who can be led astray;[19] hence, I wished to say in brief: "As though, in truth, human nature does not admit an intermediary state between folly and wisdom," for I was also considering little children; though we admit that they inherit original sin, yet we cannot properly call them either wise or foolish, since they do not as yet use free choice in a good or an evil way. In the present passage, however, I said that all men are wise or foolish, intending that those be understood who already have the use of reason whereby they are distinguished from cattle as men are. In the same sense, we say that all men wish to be happy.[20] Were we afraid that in this statement, so true and clear, little children, too—who are not yet able to will this—be understood?

(5) In another place, after I had mentioned the miracles which the Lord Jesus performed when He was here in the flesh, I added the words: " 'Why,' you will say, 'do not things of this kind happen now?' " And I replied: "Because they would not move us if they were not extraordinary; but if they were ordinary, they would not be extraordinary."[21] I

17 *Ibid.* 12.27.
18 Cf. *On Free Choice* 3.24.71.
19 Cf. Gen. 3.13.
20 Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.10.28; *On the Academics* (or: *Against the Academics)* 1.2.5; *Confessions* 10.21.31; *On the City of God* 10.1.1; *Discourses on the Psalms* 32.15 (*Sermon* 2).
21 Cf. *On the Advantage of Believing* 16.34; *Retr.* 1.12.7.

meant, however, that such great and numerous miracles no longer take place, not that no miracles occur in our times.

(6) Furthermore, at the end of the book, I said: "But since this discourse of ours has gone on much longer than I intended, let us end the book here. I want you to remember that, in it, I had not yet begun to refute the Manichaeans and I had not yet attacked those absurdities of theirs nor explained anything important about the Catholic Church itself. I wanted only to root out, if I could, the idea about true Christians, maliciously and ignorantly circulated among us, and to prepare and stimulate you to learn certain great, divine things. Let this book, then, be as it is. When, however, your soul has become more tranquil, perhaps I shall be more ready for others."[22] I did not intend this to mean that up to this time I had not written anything against the Manichaeans or anything about Catholic teaching, since so many of my books published previously testify that I had not been silent on either subject; but in this book written to him, I had "not yet" begun "to refute the Manichaeans" and I had "not yet" attacked "those absurdities of theirs" nor had I expounded "anything important about the Catholic Church itself," for I hoped that, after I had composed this as a beginning, I would write to him what I had not written here.

This book begins thus: "If to me, Honoratus, . . . seemed to be one and the same."

NOTE. At the request of a friend who wanted to consult him about the life of a monk to which he felt called, Augustine journeyed from his monastery in Tagaste to Hippo Regius. During his visit to a church there, Bishop Valerius spoke to the people about his need for a priest and suggested that they select a candidate. They chose Augustine who, constrained by them, reluctantly yielded to his ordination by Bishop Valerius (cf. *Letter* 21, *ca.* 391).

With the consent of Valerius, he established a monastery in Hippo Regius where he soon resumed his writing against the heretics. The first composition of this period mentioned by

22 Cf. *On the Advantage of Believing* 18.36.

him in his *Retractations* is the present treatise, *On the Advantage of Believing*, composed in 391 or 392, and addressed to a friend, Honoratus, whom Augustine wanted to induce to abandon Manichaeism (cf. *Retractations* 1.13). It would be interesting to know more about this addressee, but it is not possible to do so with certainty, for we do not have definitive grounds on which to identify him as: (1) the priest of the same name mentioned by Augustine in a letter to Alypius (*Letter* 83, 405 A.D.), in which Augustine manifests concern about the dispute over a legacy of this priest; (2) the bishop by this name to whom Augustine addressed another letter (*Letter* 228, 428/429 A.D.); (3) or the Honoratus whose five queries based on passages from Holy Scripture are answered by Augustine in an earlier letter (*Letter* 140, 412 A.D.). To those five questions, Augustine added a sixth dealing with grace in the New Testament and listed the discussion of this question among his works with the title *On Grace in the New Testament* (cf. *Retractations* 2.62 NOTE).

In a passage of the present work which foreshadows the biographical character of the *Confessions*, Augustine takes Honoratus along the paths he himself journeyed in his search for true religion: his years as a Manichaean and his continued and persistent indecision during that time; the disappointing and disillusioning interview with Faustus; the painful and continued states of indecision after he settled in Italy; his reflection that truth might be found in some divine authority; the decision to become a catechumen in the Catholic Church; and finally, the momentous decision to accept Catholic teaching. By this presentation, Augustine hoped to lead Honoratus along similar paths to the acknowledgement of the errors of Manichaeism and the acceptance of Catholic doctrine. We have no assurance that Honoratus was convinced by Augustine's persuasive arguments.

The author's chief purpose in writing this treatise was to convince Honoratus that belief according to Catholic teaching was not blind, but founded on authority. He presents his arguments courteously but firmly against the arguments of Honoratus, who asserted that men were forced by Catholic doctrine to believe, but not taught to do so by certain reasoning. The main theme of this work is, therefore, the relation between faith and reason.

There are no corrections of this work in the *Retractations*, but rather an endeavor on the author's part to make sure that passages are not misunderstood: by expounding them in greater detail; by suggesting in one instance, where, in one of his own works, a more appropriate explanation can be found; and by explaining a passage that he thinks may seem ambiguous.

Chapter 14

ONE BOOK ON THE TWO SOULS

(De duabus animabus liber unus)

(1) After this book,[1] I wrote, while still a priest, against the Manichaeans, *On the Two Souls,* one of which, they say, is a part of God,[2] but the other from the race of darkness which God did not create and which is coeternal with God; and, in their madness, they say that these two souls—the one good, the other evil—are in each and every man, evidently meaning that the evil soul belongs to the flesh—they also say that this flesh belongs to the race of darkness—but that the good soul is from an adventitious part of God which has been in conflict with the race of darkness, and that both commingled. Furthermore, they attribute all good in man to that good soul, but all evil to that evil soul.

I stated in this book: "There is no life whatsoever, by the very fact that it is life and insofar as it is life at all, which does not pertain to the highest source and beginning of life."[3] I spoke in this manner to indicate that the creature is understood to pertain to the Creator, but not thought to be of Him as though part of Him.

(2) Likewise, the Pelagians can think that my statement: "Sin is indeed nowhere but in the will,"[4] was made to their advantage because of little children whom they deny have original sin which is remitted for them in baptism because they do not as yet use free choice of will, just as if, in truth, the sin which we say they derive originally from Adam, that is, by being implicated in his guilt and for this reason are

1 *On the Advantage of Believing,* the work reviewed in the preceding chapter of the *Retractations.*
2 Cf. *On Heresies* 46; *Confessions* 5.10.20.
3 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 1.1.
4 *Ibid.* 9.12.

held liable to punishment, could ever be except in the will, by which will it was committed when the transgression of the divine command was made. My statement thus expressed: "Sin is not except in the will,"[5] can, indeed, be judged false on the ground that the Apostle says: "Now if I do what I do not wish, it is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells in me,"[6] for this sin is in the will to the degree that he says: "I do what I do not wish." How, then, is there never sin but in the will? But this sin about which the Apostle spoke in this way is called sin because, by sin, it was committed and is the penalty of sin, inasmuch as this is said about concupiscence of the flesh,[7] as he makes clear in the following words: "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, no good dwells. For to will is within my power, but I do not find the strength to accomplish what is good."[8] This is the perfection of good, when this concupiscence of sin is not in man, to which, in truth, when one lives a good life, the will does not consent. But, nevertheless, man does not fully accomplish the good because he still remains in the concupiscence that the will resists. The guilt of this concupiscence is remitted by baptism, but there remains the weakness against which, until he is cured, every faithful man who advances in the right direction struggles against most earnestly. Sin, however, which is "never except in the will" must especially be understood as that which is followed by just condemnation—for this "through one man entered into the world"[9]—although, indeed, that sin whereby consent is given to the concupiscence of sin is not committed except by the will. For this reason also, in another place, I said: "Sin is not committed, therefore, but by the will."[10]

(3) Similarly, in another place, I defined the will itself in

5 *Ibid.*
6 Cf. Rom. 7.20; Rom. 7.16.
7 Cf. 1 John 2.16.
8 Cf. Rom. 7.18.
9 Cf. Rom. 5.12.
10 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 10.14.

these words: "Will is a movement of the soul, under no compulsion, either toward not losing or acquiring something."[11] This was said so that, by this definition, one who wills might be distinguished from one who does not will, and so the meaning might be applied to those who, the first in paradise, were the origin of evil for the human race by sinning under no compulsion, that is, by sinning with free will, because knowingly, indeed, they acted contrary to the command, and that tempter urged but did not compel them to do this.[12] For, in fact, he who has sinned through ignorance, not inappropriately can be said to have sinned unwillingly, although, indeed, ignorant of what he did, nevertheless, he did it willingly. Hence, the sin of this man could not be without the will. This will, certainly, as it was defined, was "a movement of the soul, under no compulsion, either toward not losing or acquiring something." For he was not compelled to do something which he would not have done unless he had willed. He did it, then, because he willed, even though he did not sin because he willed, for he did not know that what he did was sin. Hence, a sin of this kind could not have been without the will, but by the will to act, not by the will to sin. This act, nevertheless, was sin, for this was an act which should not have been committed. But he who sins knowingly, if without sin he can resist the compulsion to sin but does not, without a doubt, sins willingly, for he who can resist is not compelled to surrender. But he who cannot resist insistent passion by will, and, accordingly, acts contrary to the precepts of justice, this, now, is sin in that it is in reality the penalty of sin. For this reason, it is very true that there can be no sin without the will.

(4) Similarly, the definition of sin where we said: "Sin is the will to retain or acquire what justice forbids and from which it is free to abstain,"[13] is true because what is sin only

11 *Ibid.*
12 Cf. Gen. 3.1-5.
13 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 11.15.

was defined and not also what is the penalty of sin. For when it is such that it is the same as the penalty of sin, how much does the will have in its power, when under the domination of passion, unless, perchance, if it is devout, to pray for help? For it is free insofar as it has been freed, and to this extent it is called will. Otherwise, it should be properly called passion rather than will, for passion is not an addition of an extraneous nature, as the Manichaeans in their madness assert, but an imperfection of our nature of which one could not be cured except by "the grace of the Savior."[14] But if anyone still says that passion itself is nothing else than will, but a will that is corrupt and subject to sin, I would not object nor would I engage in a controversy about the words since the matter is indisputable. For thus, again, it is made clear that without the will there is no sin, either actual or original.

(5) Again, in regard to my statement: "I now began to inquire whether that evil kind of soul, before it was commingled with the good, had any will; for if it had not, it was without sin and innocent and, therefore, by no means evil,"[15] they say: "Why, then, do you speak of the sin of little children whose will you do not hold guilty?" I reply that they are held guilty, not by reason of the individual nature of the will, but by reason of their origin. For what is every man on earth by origin but Adam? Furthermore, Adam undoubtedly had a will, and when he had sinned voluntarily, through him "sin entered into the world."[16]

(6) Likewise, I stated: "By nature souls can in no way be evil."[17] If there is a question about how we are to interpret the words of the Apostle: "We were, indeed, by nature children of wrath even as the rest,"[18] we reply that, by these words of mine, I intended that the nature which is properly called nature, in which we were created without sin, be understood.

14 Cf. Titus 2.11.
15 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 12.16.
16 Cf. Rom. 5.12.
17 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 12.17.
18 Cf. Eph. 2.3.

For that nature with sin is called nature because of its origin, and this origin certainly has sin which is contrary to nature. And again, with regard to what I said: "To hold anyone guilty of sin because he did not do what he could not do is the height of injustice and madness,"[19] they say: "Why, then, are little children held guilty?" I reply that they are held guilty because of their origin from him who did not do what he could do, namely, keep the divine commandments.[20] Moreover, what I said: "Whatever these souls do, if they do it by nature, not by will, that is, if they lack a movement of the spirit free both to do and not to do, if finally, no power of abstaining from their action is given to them, we cannot consider *the* sin theirs,"[21] does not raise a question about little children who are held guilty because of the origin of that man who sinned voluntarily since he did not lack "movement of the spirit both to do and not to do," and, therefore, had the highest power to refrain from the evil act. The Manichaeans do not say this about the race of darkness which they introduce in a most fantastic way, and contend that this nature has always been evil and never good.

(7) Furthermore, one may question in what sense I said: "Even if there are souls—which, however, is uncertain—devoted to bodily functions, not by sin, but by nature, and even if these souls, although they be inferior, are related to us by some interior affinity, they should not, on this account, be considered evil because we are evil when we follow them and love corporeal things,"[22] since I said this in relation to those souls about which I began to speak more openly saying: "And yet, even if it be conceded to them that we are enticed to shameful acts by another inferior race of souls, from this they do not draw the conclusion that these natures are evil or those the highest good"[23]—for I continued the

19 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 12.17.
20 Cf. 1 John 2.3.
21 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 12.17.
22 *Ibid.* 13.20.
23 *Ibid.*

discussion about them up to a brief statement of mine: "even if there are souls—which, however, is uncertain—devoted to bodily functions, not by sin, but by nature," and so forth. Accordingly, the question of why I said, "which, however, is uncertain" may be raised, since, certainly, I should not doubt that there are not such souls. But, in truth, I said this because I have found by experience that there are those who say that the devil and his angels are good in their own kind and, in that nature in which God created them in their own order, they are such as they are. But they are an evil for us if we are enticed and led astray by them; if, however, we are on our guard against them and overcome them, it is an honorable and glorious thing. And those who say this, seem in their own eyes to prove it by applying pertinent proofs from the Scriptures, for example, the passage in the Book of Job where the devil is described: "This is the beginning of the creation of the Lord which He made to be a sport to his angels,"[24] or that in the one-hundred-third Psalm: "This Leviathan which thou didst form to play therein."[25] At the time, I did not wish to treat and expound this question which ought to be taken up and solved, not against the Manichaeans, who do not hold this opinion, but against others who do, lest I make the book much longer than I intended, since I saw that even if this be conceded, yet the Manichaeans should and could now be convinced that, by a most insane error, they were introducing the idea of an evil nature coeternal with God. Therefore, I said, "which, however, is uncertain," not because I was doubtful of this, but because this question had not yet been settled between me and those whom I had found to hold this view. However, in other much more recent books of mine, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis*,[26] I resolved this question according to the Holy Scriptures with as great clarity as I could.

24 Cf. Job 40.14 according to the Septuagint.
25 Cf. Ps. 103.26; *On the City of God* 11.15.
26 Cf. *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 11.20.

(8) In another place, I said: "For we sin by loving corporeal things because by justice we are enjoined and by nature we are empowered to love spiritual things and, under these circumstances, in our kind, we are best and happy."[27] Here, one can ask why I said, "we are able *by nature*" and did not say *"by grace."* But the question about nature was being discussed against the Manichaeans and grace brings this about, that what nature could not do in its corrupted state, it can do once it is healed through Him who "came to seek and to save what was lost."[28] Moreover, even at this time, when calling to mind this grace, I prayed in these words for my very dear friends who were still bound by this mortal error: "Great God, omnipotent God, God of supreme goodness, whom we should believe and understand to be inviolable and incorruptible, Triune Unity whom the Catholic Church worships, I, a suppliant, having experienced your mercy in me, pray that you will not permit those persons, with whom from boyhood there has been perfect accord in human associations, to be at variance with me in your worship."[29] Assuredly, by praying in this manner, I now firmly believed that not only those converted to God[30] are aided by His grace to make progress and become perfect—when it can be said that this grace is given because of the merit of their conversion—but, in truth, it is through the grace of God itself that they are converted to God. I prayed to God for those who had turned completely away from Him[31] and I prayed that they be converted to Him.

This book begins thus: "With the assistance of God's mercy."

NOTE. The treatise, *On the Two Souls*, is the second work written by St. Augustine between his ordination to the priesthood and his episcopal consecration (391-395). It was com-

27 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 13.20.
28 Cf. Luke 19.10; Matt. 18.12.
29 Cf. *On the Two Souls* 15.24.
30 Cf. Acts 11.20-21.
31 Cf. Ecclus. (Sir.) 46.13.

posed to refute the Manichaean doctrine of two souls: each man has two souls; one emanates from an evil principle, the other from a good principle. In his *Retractations,* Augustine states this Manichaean dualistic theory succinctly: both of these souls are in each man; the good soul emanates from God, the evil soul from a race of darkness not created by but coeternal with God; all the good in a man is attributed to the good soul and all the evil to the evil soul (*Retractations* 1.14.1).

In the present work, composed about 391 or 392, Augustine, by forceful arguments based on faith and reason, denies this dual existence. Every soul, he affirms, inasmuch as it is animated, comes from God, the source of life; the origin of sin is in free choice of the will; sin is not, therefore, attributable to an evil soul. According to this argument, each man is personally responsible for his own sins.

Augustine devotes a great deal of space, comparatively speaking, to this treatise in the present chapter of his *Retractations,* where he cites several passages and examines them critically. Here, his discussion is characterized mainly by prolonged, detailed explanations and, in general, by a defense of his position to avoid misinterpretation or to clarify it. In three instances, he defines sin and holds that his definitions are tenable. Admitting that the Pelagians could use one of his statements to support their view on original sin, he upholds his statement on original sin and elaborates on it. In more than one case, his explanations involve a defense of free choice of the will and of original sin, an argument he repeated in subsequent writings.

Augustine ends this chapter of the *Retractations* with a moving prayer, reproduced from the work discussed, for those who have been associated with him from his boyhood.

Chapter 15

ONE BOOK, ACTS AGAINST FORTUNATUS, THE MANICHAEAN

(Acta contra Fortunatum Manicheum, liber unus)

(1) At the same period of my priesthood, I argued against a certain Fortunatus, a priest of the Manichaeans, who had lived in Hippo for a long time and had led so many astray that, because of them, it was most pleasant for him to live

there. This discussion was recorded by stenographers during our disputation just as though public records were being drawn up, for they bear the day of the month and the consular year. I have compressed this disputation into a book to serve as an historical record. In it, the question of the origin of evil is treated. I affirmed that the evil of mankind has sprung from free choice of the will; he, on the other hand, tried to show that the nature of evil is coeternal with God. But on the following day, he at last admitted that he found nothing which he could say against us. He did not become a Catholic, but, nevertheless, he left Hippo.

(2) In this book, my statement: "I say that the soul was made by God as all other things that have been made by God, and that among the things which the omnipotent God has made, first place was given to the soul,"[1] was so made with the intention that this be understood in general about every rational creature, although, in the Holy Scriptures, it is either not at all possible to find, or not possible to find without difficulty, reference to the souls of angels, as I have already said above.[2]

In like manner in another place, I said: "I say that it is not sin if it is not committed of one's own will."[3] Here, I intended that sin which is not also a punishment for sin be understood; for elsewhere in the same discussion,[4] I said what should be said about punishment of this kind.

Again, I said: "So that at a later time this same flesh which has tortured us with punishments while we remained in sin, will be subject to us at the resurrection and will not induce us by any adversity from observing the law and the divine precepts."[5] This should not be interpreted as though, even in that kingdom of God where we shall have an incorruptible and immortal body, we are to use the law and the

1 Cf. *Acts against Fortunatus, the Manichaean* 1.13.
2 Cf. *Retr.* 1.10.4.
3 Cf. *Acts against Fortunatus, the Manichaean* 2.21.
4 *Ibid.* 1.15; cf. *Retr.* 1.14.3.
5 Cf. *Acts against Fortunatus, the Manichaean* 2.22.

precepts of the divine Scriptures, because there, in truth, the eternal law will be observed most perfectly and we shall keep these two precepts of the love of God and neighbor,[6] not by reading, but by that perfect and eternal love itself.

This work begins thus: "On the twenty-eighth of August during the consulship of the illustrious Arcadius Augustus for the second time and of Rufinus."

NOTE. A persistent, strong request of an unusual group of Christians, Catholics and Donatists from Hippo Regius, for a public debate between Augustine and Fortunatus, a Manichaean priest who had been a resident of that city for a long time, where, according to St. Augustine, his life was pleasant because of the presence there of many persons whom he had converted to Manichaeism (cf. *Retractations* 1.15.1), gave rise to a discussion in which Fortunatus reluctantly and Augustine willingly took part. Their audience consisted of people who assembled either through genuine interest in the discussion or through curiosity. This public disputation was recorded by stenographers who, following the prevailing custom of recording public proceedings, added the days, month, and the names of the consuls then in authority. We are thus certain that this debate took place on August 28 and 29, during the consulship of Arcadius Augustus and Rufinus, 392. Augustine, desirous of perpetuating the record of this argument, put it into book form and entitled it *Acts against Fortunatus, the Manichaean.*

The main question of this disputation is the nature of evil. Fortunatus argues in favor of the Manichaean position that evil is coeternal with God. Augustine contends that evil has its source in free choice of the will. Augustine was a brilliantly successful debater because of his faith, his knowledge of both Catholic and Manichaean doctrine, his experience in that sect, his zeal, and his skill as a speaker. At the end of the second day of the debate, Fortunatus admitted his inability to answer Augustine's objections, but offered to refer said arguments to his superiors. Thereupon his followers decided that he had failed them. He left Hippo Regius directly and there is no record of his return.

This work receives a rather brief treatment in the *Retractations,* where Augustine expounds one passage, states that a second is adequate, and explains a third to avoid misinterpretation. Obviously, he did not think it necessary to emend the arguments he presented.

6 Cf. Deut. 6.5; Mark 12.30-31; Luke 10.27.

Chapter 16

ONE BOOK ON FAITH AND THE CREED

(De fide et symbolo liber unus)

In the same period, in the presence and at the request of the bishops[1] who were holding a Plenary Council of all Africa at Hippo Regius, I spoke on faith and the Creed. On the urgent insistence of some who loved me especially dearly, I compressed this disputation into a book. In this book, the points in question are so discussed that the text is not precisely in the form given to catechumens to be committed to memory.

In this book where I was treating of the resurrection of the flesh, I said: "According to Christian faith which cannot err, the body will rise again. This seems incredible to anyone who thinks of the flesh as it is now, but does not consider it as it will be; for, at the time of angelic transformation, there will no longer be flesh and blood, but only body,"[1a] and I discussed other things there about the change of earthly bodies into celestial bodies, since, when he was speaking about this, the Apostle said: "Flesh and blood will not possess the kingdom of God."[2] But anyone who interprets this in such a way as to think that the earthly body as we have it now is so changed into a celestial body at the resurrection that there will be neither these members nor the substance of flesh, certainly, without a doubt, is to be reproved, admonished by the body

1 In Knöll's Latin text, here translated, Augustine calls no special attention to the fact that he was speaking as a mere priest before bishops. In the text followed in all previous editions *presbyter* ("priest") precedes the verb, yielding the sense: "I, a mere priest, spoke on faith and the Creed." For a criticism of Knöll's choice of reading, see Jülicher, in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 28 (1903) 53.
1a Cf. *On Faith and the Creed* 10.24.
2 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.50.

of the Lord who, after the Resurrection, appeared with the same members. He was not only visible to the eyes, but touchable by the hands. Furthermore, He confirmed, also by word, the fact that He had flesh, saying: "Feel me and see, for a spirit does not have bones and flesh as you see I have."[3] Hence, it is clear that the Apostle did not deny that there would be the substance of flesh in the kingdom of God, but, by the terms flesh and blood, he meant either those who live according to the flesh or the actual corruption of the flesh of which, assuredly, at that time there will be none. For after he had said: "Flesh and blood will not possess the kingdom of God"[4]—he is clearly understood to be explaining, as it were, what he had said—he immediately added: "Nor shall corruption have any part in incorruption."[5] It is difficult to convincingly persuade unbelievers on this point. Whoever will read the last book of *On the City of God* will find that I have treated this subject carefully and to the best of my ability.[6]

This book begins thus: "For it was written."

NOTE. In October, 393, during a meeting of a Plenary Council in Hippo Regius, St. Augustine was ordered by the bishops of Africa to speak before them (cf. *Retractations, supra*). He chose faith and the Creed for his subject. At the urgent insistence of persons devoted to him, he put this discussion into book form *(ibid.)* under the title, *On Faith and the Creed.* He himself tells us that the wording used in it differs from that given to catechumens for memorization (cf. *ibid.*). This may be due to the fact that, at that time, it was the practice of the Church not to put the Creed into writing lest it be ridiculed or misinterpreted by unbelievers (cf. *Letter* 227, FC 32.139-141 n. 9; *Sermons* 58 and 212).

At the beginning of this work, devoted primarily to an explanation of the articles of the Creed, St. Augustine affirms the necessity for faith and the need of safeguarding it against heretics, and asserts that Catholic faith is made known through the Creed.

3 Cf. Luke 24.39.
4 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.50; cf. Rom. 8.12-31.
5 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.50.
6 Cf. *On the City of God* 22.5.21.

As the reason for Augustine's listing this writing among his *libri* and not among his sermons, some adduce the importance it derived from the unprecedented circumstances under which it was composed, namely, to be delivered by a priest in the presence of bishops, a procedure heretofore unheard of in the Church in Africa. However, Augustine in his *Retractations* does not refer to this writing as a sermon, and, in reference to it, he uses rather the words *disputavi* and *disputationem* (sect. 1). It plainly enters into the count of *opera* and *libri* arrived at in the final paragraph of the *Retractations.*

In discussing this work in his *Retractations,* Augustine gives an exegesis of Scripture in order to clarify and defend a passage, deems a second passage adequate, and expounds a third to make its meaning unmistakable. No corrections or adverse criticisms of the treatise proper are presented.

Chapter 17

ONE UNFINISHED BOOK ON THE LITERAL MEANING OF GENESIS

(De Genesi ad litteram liber unus inperfectus)

After I had composed the two books of *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans,* and had explained the words of Scripture according to their allegorical meaning, not presuming to explain such great mysteries of natural things literally[1]—that is, in what sense the statements there made can be interpreted according to their historical signification—I wanted to test my capabilities in this truly most taxing and difficult work also. But in explaining the Scriptures, my inexperience collapsed under the weight of so heavy a load and, before I had finished one book, I rested from this labor which I could not endure. But while I was re-examining my writings in the present work, this very book came into my hands, unfinished as it was, which I had not published and which I had decided to destroy since, at a later time, I wrote twelve books entitled

1 Cf. *Retr.* 1.9.

On the Literal Meaning of Genesis.[2] Although in those books many questions seem to have been proposed rather than solved, yet this present book is by no means to be compared with those books. But, still, after I had re-examined this book, I decided to keep it so that it might serve as evidence, useful in my opinion, of my first attempts to explain and search into the divine Scriptures, and I determined that its title should be *One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis.*[3] In fact, I discovered that this book had been dictated as far as these words: "The Father, however, is the Father and the Son is nothing else but the Son, because even when likeness to the Father is mentioned, although it shows that there is no unlikeness between them, yet the Father is not alone if He has a likeness."[4]

Then, I again repeated the words of Scripture for consideration and examination: "And God said, 'let us make man to our image and likeness.' "[5] I had left the book unfinished, dictated up to this point. But when I re-examined this book, I thought that what follows here ought to be added and yet, even by doing this, I did not finish it. For if I had finished it, I would at least have discussed all the works and words of God which pertain to the sixth day.[6] It seems superfluous to me to note in this book the same things that displease me, or to defend those which may displease others through not being well understood. Instead, in fact, I briefly advise them to read the twelve books that I composed much later. From those, this book can be judged.

This book, then, begins thus: "With regard to the obscurities of natural things which we know were made by the omnipotent God, the Creator, we should make an investigation, not by affirming, but by inquiring."

2 *Ibid.* 2.50.
3 Cf. *One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 1.1 (PL 34; CSEL 28.1).
4 *Ibid.* 16.60.
5 Cf. Gen. 1.26.
6 Cf. Gen. 1.24-2.1.

NOTE. As the title indicates, *One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* Augustine's second commentary on the first chapters of Genesis was not completed. The first, an allegorical interpretation, *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans,* written *ca.* 389, was composed after Augustine had returned from Italy. Its purpose was to defend the account of creation in Genesis against the Manichaeans (cf. *Retractations* 1.9). At that time, the author did not venture to explain the natural phenomena literally. A few years later, however, he decided to put himself to the test by undertaking this difficult and taxing task in order to prove to the ,Manichaeans that the story of creation in Genesis could be explained literally without falling into their errors. The present commentary is the result. Before the first book was completed, Augustine found the undertaking beyond endurance and, succumbing to utter weariness, he gave it up. Years later, while writing his *Retractations,* he came upon a copy of it. At first, he decided to destroy it, for meanwhile he had written (*ca.* 401-405) a third lengthy and complete commentary, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* (cf. *Retractations* 2.50), which he began after, but completed before, his work, *On the Trinity* (composed *ca.* 400-419). This commentary he considered adequate. After further deliberation, he determined to preserve the present work as evidence of his first exegetical endeavors. However, he made additions to the original manuscript before releasing this treatise. The suggested date for the beginning of this work is about 393; the additions to it were probably made about 427.

Augustine testifies to his interest in the account of creation according to Genesis, not only by writing the three commentaries mentioned above, but also by further references to this subject in other works. Compare, for example, *Confessions,* Books 11-13, and *On the City of God,* Books 11-12. The most important of Augustine's three commentaries on the first chapters of the Book of Genesis is, undoubtedly, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* which will be discussed later (cf. *Retractations* 2.50).

Chapter 18

TWO BOOKS ON THE LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

(De sermone Domini in monte libri duo)

(1) In the same period, I wrote two books, *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount,* according to Matthew.

In the first of these, because of the words: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God,"[1] I said: "Wisdom appertains to the peacemakers in whom all things now are in order and no movement is rebellious against reason, but all things obey the spirit of man as it, in truth, obeys God."[2] I am rightly concerned with the way in which I said this, for it is not possible in this life for anyone to reach a state wherein "the law warring against the law of the mind"[3] is not also present in the members, since, even if the spirit of man should resist in such a way that it does not slip into giving its consent, yet it would continue to struggle. Hence, what I said: "No movement is rebellious against reason," can correctly be applied to peacemakers in the sense that, by subduing the concupiscence of the flesh,[4] they eventually arrive at this absolute peace.

(2) Accordingly, in another place, after I again referred to this same passage of the Gospel, by repeating: "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God," I added: "And these things can be realized even in this life as we believe they were realized in the Apostles."[5] This is not to be understood as though I think that no movement of the flesh warred against the spirit in the Apostles while they were on earth, but rather that these things can be

1 Cf. Matt. 5.9.
2 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.4.11.
3 Cf. Rom. 7.23.
4 Cf. 1 John 2.16.
5 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.4.12.

realized here to the same degree we believe they were realized in the Apostles, that is to say, to that measure of human perfection to the degree that perfection is possible in this life. In truth, I did not say: "These things can be realized in this life *for* we believe they were realized in the Apostles," but I said: "*as* we believe they were realized in the Apostles," namely, that they are realized as they were realized in them, that is, with the kind of perfection of which this life is capable, not as those things are to be realized, with that absolute peace for which we hope when we say: "O death, where is thy struggle?"[6]

(3) In another place, though I cited this text as a proof: "For not by measure does God give the Spirit,"[7] I did not yet understand that this is, more truly, to be understood in a proper sense about Christ. For if the Spirit were not given to other men by measure, Eliseus would not have asked for twice as much [Spirit] as was in Elias.[8] Likewise, when I was explaining the passage: "Not one jot and one tittle shall pass from the law till all things have been accomplished,"[9] I said that nothing else can be understood except a strong expression of perfection.[10] With regard to this, one may justly ask whether this perfection can be so understood that it is true, however, that no one who now has free choice of will lives here without sin. For by whom can the law be fulfilled up to one tittle except by a man who observes all the commandments of God? But among these very commandments there is, in truth, one which we are ordered to say: "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors,"[11] a prayer the entire Church will say until the end of the world. Therefore, all

6 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.55. The variation in reading deserves mention—Vulgate: *ubi est, mors, stimulus tuus?* ("Where, death, is your sting?"); Augustine: *ubi est mors, contentio tua?*
7 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.6.17; John 3.34.
8 Cf. 4 Kings 2.9.
9 Cf. Matt. 5.18.
10 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.8.20.
11 Cf. Matt. 6.12.

the commandments are considered fulfilled when whatever is not fulfilled is forgiven.

(4) What the Lord says: "For whoever does away with one of these least commandments and so teaches," and the rest up to that passage where He says: "Unless your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven,"[12-13] I have explained in a much better and more appropriate way in other later sermons of mine;[14] it would, indeed, be tedious to repeat this here. This meaning, then, is reduced to this: the justice of those who say and do is greater than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees. In fact, in another passage, the Lord Himself makes the following remark about the Scribes and Pharisees: "For they talk but do nothing."[15]

Likewise, at a later time,[16] we had a much better understanding of the text: "Whosoever is angry with his brother."[17] For the Greek manuscripts do not have "without cause" as is stated here [i.e., in some Latin manuscripts], although the meaning is the same. For we said that it is necessary to consider what to be angry with one's brother means, for one who is angry at the sin of his brother is not angry with his brother. He, then, who is angry with his brother, but not because of his sin, is angry without cause.

(5) Likewise, my statement: "This is to be understood both of father and mother and the other ties of blood, that in them we hate what is allotted to the human race by birth and death,"[18] sounds as if these relationships would not exist if no one had died and there had not been a prior sin of human nature. I have already rejected this interpretation

12 Cf. Matt. 5.19-20; *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.9.21.
13 *Ibid.*
14 Cf. *Commentary on the Gospel of John (Tractatus in Ioannis Evangelium)* 122.9; *On the City of God* 20.9; *On Faith and Works* 26.48 (cf. *Retr.* 2.64).
15 Cf. Matt. 23.3.
16 Cf. *On the City of God* 21.27.
17 Cf. Matt. 5.22; *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.9.25.
18 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.15.41.

above.[19] For, assuredly, there would be blood relations and kinsmen even if, free from original sin, without death, the human race should increase and multiply.[20] And for this reason, the question of the reason for the Master's command that we love our enemies,[21] although in another place He commands hatred of parents and children,[22] must be solved in a different way from the way in which it was solved here, and rather as we solved it later,[23] that is, that we should love our enemies to win them to the kingdom of God, and we should hate those among our kindred who stand in the way of the kingdom of God.

(6) Likewise, I discussed here, most exactly, the precept by which a wife is forbidden to be put away save on account of immorality.[24-25] But the following question should be considered and examined again and again: what immorality the Lord means to be understood as that for which one may put away his wife—that which is condemned in licentious acts or that about which the following is said: "Thou destroyest everyone who is unfaithful to Thee,"[26] in which, certainly, the former is included—for surely that man is unfaithful to the Lord who "taking the members of Christ makes them members of a harlot."[27] In a matter of such importance and so difficult to decide, I do not want the reader to conclude that this discussion of ours ought to suffice, but rather he should also read either other discussions of ours written at a later time,[28] or those of others that have considered and dealt with this subject in a better way; or, if possible, he should examine, with a more alert and more penetrating mind, those

19 Cf. *Retr.* 1.9.2; 1.12.8.
20 Cf. Gen. 1.22; 1.28; 9.1; 9.7.
21 Cf. Matt. 5.44; Luke 6.27.
22 Cf. Matt. 10.37; Luke 14.26.
23 Cf. *On the City of God* 21.26; *On the True Religion* 45.85-89.
24 Cf. Matt. 5.32. In the Confraternity edition, *fornicatio* is translated "immorality."
25 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.16.43.
26 Cf. Ps. 72.27.
27 Cf. 1 Cor. 6.15.
28 Cf. *Questions on the Heptateuch* 2.71. (cf. *Retr.* 2.81).

things which rightly have the power to move him here. For not every sin is immorality; God who daily hears His saints when they say: "Forgive us our debts,"[29] does not destroy every sinner although He destroys everyone "who is unfaithful to Him."[30] But what is to be understood by immorality and how it is to be limited, and whether, because of it, one may put away his wife is a most obscure question. Yet there is no doubt that this is permitted because of the immorality committed in licentious acts. But when I said that this was permitted, not commanded, I did not heed another Scriptural passage which states: "He that keepeth an adulteress is foolish and wicked."[31] Certainly, I would not say that that woman should, indeed, be considered an adulteress after she heard from the Lord: "Neither will I condemn thee; go thy way and from now on sin no more,"[32] if she heeded this in a spirit of obedience.

(7) In another place, I defined the sin of a brother unto death about which the Apostle John says: "I do not mean that one should ask as to that,"[33] in the following words: "I think that the sin of a brother is unto death when anyone who has attained a knowledge of God through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, opposes the brotherhood and is aroused by the fires of envy against that very grace by which he was reconciled to God."[34] In truth, I did not affirm this, since I said that I *thought* this, but, nevertheless, I should have added, "if he ends this life in a perversity of mind as wicked as this," for surely, we must not despair of anyone, no matter how wicked he is, while he lives, and we should pray with confidence for him of whom we should not despair.

(8) In the second book, likewise I said: "No one will be permitted to be ignorant of the kingdom of God when His

29 Cf. Matt. 6.12.
30 Cf. Ps. 72.27.
31 Cf. Prov. 18.22.
32 Cf. John 8.11.
33 Cf. 1 John 5.16.
34 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.22.73. Here, as elsewhere, Augustine expands his text.

Only-begotten will come from heaven, not only perceivable by the intellect, but also visible to the senses as the Man of the Lord, 'to judge the living and the dead.' "[35-36] But I do not see whether it is right to call Him who is "the Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,"[37] Man of the Lord (since certainly He is the Lord[37a]). Furthermore, who in His holy household cannot be called a man of the Lord? Indeed, I said this as I read it in the writings of certain Catholic commentators on the Sacred Scriptures.[38] But wherever I said this, I wish that I had not.[39] Later, in fact, I saw that it should not have been said although it can be defended with some justification. Likewise, I realize that this should not have been said: "For hardly anyone's conscience can hate God."[40] For there are many about whom this is written: "The pride of them that rise against Thee."[41]

(9) When I said in another place: "For this reason the Lord said: 'Sufficient for the day is its own trouble,'[42] because necessity itself urges us to take food, and I suppose that this has been called an evil because for us it is subject to punishment for it pertains to this frailty which we have merited by sinning,"[43] I did not take into consideration the fact that bodily nourishment was given even to the first men in Paradise before they had merited this penalty of death by sinning. For they were immortal in a body not yet spiritual, but animate yet insofar as that, in an immortality of this kind, they used bodily nourishment.

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35 *Ibid.* 2.6.20.
36 Cf. 2 Tim. 4.1.
37 Cf. 1 Tim. 2.5.
37a The genuineness of the clause in parenthesis was wrongly questioned by Knöll, as von Funk promptly noted (*Theologische Quartalschrift* 85 [1903] 605).
38 Cf. Epiphanius, *Ancoratus* 93; Athanasius, *Exegesis of the Psalms* 40.6; Cassian, *Conversations of the Fathers (Collationes Patrum)* 11.13; cf. B. Altaner, *Patrology* 538.
39 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 2.6.20.
40 *Ibid.* 2.14.48.
41 Cf. Ps. 73.23.
42 Cf. Matt. 6.34.
43 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 2.17.56.

Likewise, my statements: ". . . which God has chosen for Himself 'a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle,' "[44-45] I did not mean by this that, in every respect, the Church is now in this state although, without question, elected for this so that it will be such when "Christ, its life, shall appear; for then it, too, will appear with Him in glory,"[46] and because of this glory it has been called "a glorious church."

Similarly, because the Lord says: "Ask and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you,"[47] I thought that the manner in which these three differ from one another should, in fact, be explained accurately;[48] but it is far better to refer to all [three] as a most urgent petition. For Christ showed this when He included all these in the same statement, saying: "How much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?"[49] For He did not say: "To them that ask, to them that seek, to them that knock."

This work begins thus: "The sermon which the Lord delivered."

NOTE. One of the longest and most important discourses of our Lord is that familiarly known as the Sermon on the Mount. Two versions of it are found in Holy Scripture: that of St. Matthew (5-7) and that of St. Luke (6.20-49). Augustine based the present treatise, *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount,* an interpretation of that discourse, on St. Matthew's account of it. It was composed about 393 or 394. The first book of this work is concerned with the fifth chapter of this Gospel; the second with chapters six and seven.

That Augustine chose as a subject for one of his works this remarkable condensation of Christian ethics and Christ's moral theology is not to be wondered at. To this life-long searcher of truth, obedience to the precepts of Christ through love rather than fear as in the Old Law, the lesson contained in the Sermon on the Mount was a way of life for all followers

44 *Ibid.* 2.19.66.
45 Cf. Eph. 5.27; cf. *Tractatus in Ioannis Evangelium* 56.5.
46 Cf. Col. 3.4.
47 Cf. Matt. 7.7.
48 Cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 2.21.71.
49 Cf. Matt. 7.11.

of Christ. Hence, his desire to make this sermon of his beloved Master clearly understood and better known by writing the present treatise.

In the first book of this work, Augustine, by considering the first and last Beatitudes identical, reduces their number to seven. He compares them to the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, whose order he reversed. The second book, which deals with prayer, is considered a compendium of the theology of prayer. Its crux is the section devoted to the interpretation of the Lord's Prayer, whose seven petitions Augustine compares with the seven Beatitudes. This portion of the treatise is one of its outstanding features.

Chapter 19

ONE BOOK, A PSALM AGAINST THE PARTY OF DONATUS

(Psalmus contra partem Donati, liber unus)

Because I wished, too, to familiarize the most lowly people, and especially the ignorant and uneducated, with the cause of the Donatists and to impress it on their memory to the best of my ability, I composed a psalm to be sung by them, arranged according to the Latin alphabet, and only as far as the letter *V*, that is, in the so-called abecedarian style. However, I omitted the last three letters, but in their place at the end, I added an epilogue, so to speak, as though Mother Church were addressing them. Moreover, the refrain which is repeated again and again, and the proemium to the cause which we wanted sung, are not in alphabetical order. In fact, the alphabetical order begins after the proemium. Furthermore, I did not want this psalm composed in any form of metrical verse lest the metrical requirements force me [to use] some words which are not familiar to the common people.

This psalm begins thus: "All you who delight in peace now judge what is true," which is its refrain.

NOTE. The rhythmical poem, *A Psalm against the Party of Donatus*, written about 393/394, is the first of Augustine's nineteen anti-Donatist writings treated in the *Retractations*; of these only twelve survive. It marks the beginning of the author's long literary participation in the Donatist controversy, which ended more than a quarter of a century later, in 420, with the publication of *Against Gaudentius, Bishop of the Donatists* (cf. *Retractations* 2.85). Unlike the other eighteen works, this poem is instructive rather than polemic in nature.

It consists of: (1) a proemium or prologue; (2) twenty stanzas of twelve lines each; (3) a refrain, "*Omnes qui gaudetis de pace, modo verum iudicate*," with which the psalm begins and which occurs twenty-two times; and (4) an epilogue. Thanks to modern scholarship, we have a text of this poem which answers to the description of it given by Augustine. [Cf. the complete emended text of Dom C. Lambot in *Revue Bénédictine* 47 (1935) 312-330 with the earlier edition of M. Petschenig in CSEL 51 (1908) 1-15. Petschenig's text does not have the *proemium* and, in the third and sixteenth stanzas, there are only eleven and ten lines respectively].

The initial letter of the first word of each of the twenty stanzas is in alphabetical succession beginning with the letter *a* and ending with *v*. This alphabetical arrangement from which the poem receives its designation, an "abecedarian" or "alphabetical" psalm (cf. *Retractations, supra*), begins after the prologue and ends before the epilogue. Each line of the twenty stanzas ends either in *e* or *ae*, a rhyming device that may have been used for melodic reasons.

Augustine wrote this poem to enlighten unlettered, simple people. In it, he gives a brief history of the Donatist schism from its inception, warns the people against its dangers, and invites the schismatics to return to the fold of the Church. He concludes with an epilogue, an exalted, moving, earnest plea of a personified Mother Church to her separated children.

Unlike the religious poetry of St. Ambrose, whose classical tradition has been imitated by liturgical poets of the Western Church through the ages, this highly interesting, unusual poem does not conform to the principles of classical prosody for reasons stated by the author himself (*ibid.*): he did not want to be constrained by the rules of metrical verse to use words unfamiliar to lowly, uneducated people. In order to impress indelibly on the memory of such folk the content of this psalm (*ibid.*), Augustine sacrificed literary excellence. Yet it is not without literary merit (cf. B. Altaner, *op. cit.* 516). Moreover, as one of the probably earliest examples of rhythmic Latin poetry [the dates of Commodian's life and poetry are still

disputed; cf. Altaner, *op. cit.* 385-386], it holds a significant place in the history of Latin verse.

Furthermore, it resembles the religious poetry of the Syrian Church of which St. Ephrem (306-373), its great classic poet, is the outstanding sacred poet. To combat heresies St. Ephrem, a famous exegete, preacher, and poet, wrote poems, and hymns to be sung in church (cf. C. Dawson, *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* 39-40). It is possible that Augustine was acquainted with these compositions (cf. Altaner, *op. cit.* 401). He was, of course, much more familiar with the hymns of St. Ambrose, their origin and their purpose.

The Donatist schism arose in Africa during the persecution of Diocletian, who sought to suppress Christianity by confiscating the Scriptures. Christians who handed over these Sacred Books to the Pagans were known as *traditores*. In 311, a group of African Christians refused to acknowledge the consecration of Caecilian, Bishop of Carthage (cf. *Letter* 185, of about 417, and *Retractations* 2.43 NOTE), on the pretext that his consecrator, Felix of Aptunga, was a *traditor* (cf. *Letter* 141, 412 A.D.). They consecrated Majorinus in his place. In 313, the consecration of Caecilian was confirmed at Rome after a careful investigation. The dissenters who did not accept this decision originated the schismatic sect known in ecclesiastical history as Donatists, whose teachings were a decided threat to the Church in Africa for more than a century.

Majorinus died in 315, and was succeeded by Donatus, called the Great, who gave his name to the Donatist party. He, in turn, was succeeded in 355 by Parmenian, who ruled over the Donatist See of Carthage until 391. Both Optatus of Milevis and Augustine wrote against him (cf. *infra* and *Retractations* 2.43). The cause of Donatism was furthered by a fanatic, violent group known as the Circumcellions (cf. *On Heresies* 69 [Müller pp. 110f., 196f.]; *Discourses on the Psalms* 132; *Against Gaudentius* 1.32), and by other lawless bands with whom the leaders of this sect associated themselves.

Despite anti-Donatist imperial decrees (at times extremely severe), condemnations by synods and popes, attempts at reconciliation through Catholic-Donatist conferences, dissension and schisms within this schism (i.e., the Maximianists and Rogatists), and the efforts on the part of individuals to win back these separatists to the fold of the Church, Donatism continued to flourish and expand in Africa during the fourth century, so that it seemed to threaten the very existence of the Church there. It was considerably weakened by the action taken at the famous Council of Carthage in 411 (cf. *Retractations* 2.65 and 2.74; *Letter* 141; *Letter* 185), but it survived. In 420, when Augustine wrote his last treatise against Donatism (cf. *Re-*

tractations 2.85), its cause was practically a lost one. An attempt at resurgence was made by the Donatists at the end of the sixth century. Finally, they either entirely disappeared or merged with other schismatic groups when the Saracens overran the Church in Africa in the seventh and eighth centuries.

The Donatists produced a significant amount of literature, as we know from the refutations of orthodox writers. According to St. Jerome (*De viris illustribus* 67), Donatus the Great wrote many works, but these have not survived. So far as can be determined from the anti-Donatist writings that are extant, this schism was in existence for more than half a century before it was attacked by Catholic writers.

Prior to Augustine's literary participation in the Catholic-Donatist controversy, the first considerable anti-Donatist writing we possess is *Against Parmenian, the Donatist* or *On the Schism of the Donatists (Contra Parmenianum Donatistam* or *De schismate Donatistarum)* of St. Optatus, Bishop of Milevis in Numidia (cf. Augustine's *Letter* 141). The first edition of this work consisted of six books and was published in 366 or 367. About twenty years later, the author published a revised, enlarged edition in seven books. It represents the first theological attack on Donatism and, for this reason, is especially valuable to theologians and to those interested in Augustine's subsequent anti-Donatist theological treatises, which are a development of the doctrines of Optatus on the true Church and the validity of the Sacraments, the principal points of controversy between Catholics and Donatists (cf. Altaner, *op. cit.* 435, for a résumé of the work of Optatus).

During most of his episcopal life, Augustine fought against this schismatic body in his sermons, letters, conferences, and treatises, and, in this one instance, in a poem. The treatises will be discussed in the following pages in the order in which they appear in the *Retractations.*

Chapter 20

ONE BOOK AGAINST A LETTER OF THE HERETIC DONATUS

(Contra epistulam Donati heretici liber unus)

(1) In this same period of my priesthood, I also wrote a book[1] against a letter of Donatus who, after Majorinus, was the second bishop of the party of Donatus at Carthage. In this letter, he argues that the baptism of Christ is believed to be only in his communion. It is against this letter that we speak in this book.

In a passage in this book, I said about the Apostle Peter: "On him as on a rock the Church was built." This idea is also expressed in song by the voice of many in the verses of the most blessed Ambrose where he says about the crowing of the cock: "At its crowing he, this rock of the Church, washed away his guilt."[2] But I know that very frequently at a later time,[3] I so explained what the Lord said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church,"[4] that it be understood as built upon Him whom Peter confessed saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,"[5] and so Peter, called after this rock, represented the person of the Church which is built upon this rock, and has received "the keys of the kingdom of heaven."[6] For, "Thou art Peter" and not "Thou art the rock" was said to him. But "the rock was Christ,"[7] in confessing whom, as also the whole Church confesses, Simon was called Peter. But let the

1 This work is not extant.
2 Cf. Ambrose, *Hymn* 1.
3 Cf. *Sermon* 76.1.1.
4 Matt. 16.18.
5 Cf. Matt. 16.16; John 6.70.
6 Cf. Matt. 16.19.
7 Cf. 1 Cor. 10.4.

reader decide which of these two opinions is the more probable.

(2) In another place, I said: "God does not seek the death of anyone." This should be interpreted as follows: man brought death on himself by abandoning God and he who does not return to God brings it on himself according to what is written: "For God made not death."[8] But the following, too, is no less true: "Life and death . . . are from the Lord God,"[9] that is, life is from the giver, death from the avenger.

(3) Likewise, although I said: "Donatus"—whose letter I was refuting—"asked that the Emperor appoint bishops from overseas as judges to represent him and Caecilian," I discovered that, more probably, not he but another Donatus, of the same schism however, had done this.[10] This Donatus, however, was not the bishop of the Donatists at Carthage, but at Casae Nigrae;[11] nevertheless, he was the first to establish this wicked schism in Carthage. Assuredly, "Donatus of Carthage did not introduce the teaching that Christians be rebaptized"—as I believed he had done at the time I answered his letter[12]—"nor did he take from the middle of a sentence of a book of Wisdom words necessary to the argument," where, although it is written: "He that washeth himself after touching the dead and toucheth him again, what doth his washing avail?,"[13] he [the other Donatus] stated it as though it were written: "He that washeth himself after touching the dead, what doth his washing avail?" Later, however, we learned that even before the party of Donatus existed, numerous codices—African however—did not have it as it is in the middle of the sentence: "and toucheth him again." If I had

8 Cf. Wisd. 1.13.
9 Cf. Ecclus. (Sir.) 11.14.
10 Cf. *Letter* 43.
11 Cf. *On Heresies* 69.
12 Cf. *On Baptism* 6.33.65 (*Retr.* 2.44); *In Answer to Cresconius, a Grammarian of the Donatist Party* 2.7.33 (*Retr.* 2.52).
13 Cf. Ecclus. (Sir.) 34.30; *Letter* 108.

known this at the time, I would not have spoken so sharply against that man as though I were denouncing a thief or a profaner of Holy Scripture.

This book begins thus: "I had heard directly from you."

NOTE. It is regrettable that neither the letter of Donatus nor Augustine's reply, *Against a Letter of the Heretic Donatus*, is extant, not only because the latter is the only work of Augustine directed against the man who is thought to have given his name to the Donatists, but also because it is but one of several treatises of Augustine against the Donatists which have been lost. Their possession would throw further light on a schism strong in Africa at this time, and on Augustine's part in its refutation. We are fortunate, however, to have Augustine's *Retractations* where we find the title and a brief review of this work, the approximate time of its composition, and a brief summary of the arguments contained in Donatus' letter and of Augustine's refutation of them (sect. 1-2).

Chapter 21

ONE BOOK AGAINST ADIMANTUS, A DISCIPLE OF MANI

(Contra Adimantum Manichei discipulum liber unus)

(1) In the same period, there came into my hands certain arguments of Adimantus, who was a disciple of Mani, which he wrote against the Law and the Prophets as though he were trying to show that the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles were opposed to them. I answered him by citing his words and refuting them. I here incorporated this in one volume. In this, I replied to certain questions, not once, but a second time, for what I had said in reply had been lost and was then found after I had replied a second time. Actually, I solved some of these questions in sermons delivered to the people in church.[1] And, up to the present time, I

1 Cf. *Sermons* 1, 50, 153, 182.

have not yet replied to some. Still others have remained which, because of more pressing matters, have been overlooked—to say nothing of accumulated forgetfulness on my part.

(2) In this book, I said: "For before the coming of the Lord, the people who had received the Old Testament were sustained by certain shadowy signs and figures according to a wonderful and well ordered arrangement of the times; in it, however, there is such an announcement and preparation of the New Testament that in the Gospel and in the teaching of the Apostles no precepts and promises, howsoever difficult and divine, are found which are not also found in those ancient books."[2] But I should have added the word, "almost," and then it would read that "in the Gospel and in the teaching of the Apostles *almost* no precepts and divine promises are found which are not also found in those ancient books." For what is the meaning of the words of the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel: "You have heard that this was said to the ancients; . . . but I say to you,"[3] if He Himself does not enjoin anything more than was enjoined in those ancient books? Furthermore, we do not read that "the kingdom of heaven"[4] was promised to that people among the things which were promised by the Law given by Moses on Mount Sinai[5] which is properly called the Old Testament and which the Apostle says was prefigured by the handmaid of Sara and her son.[6] But the New Testament is also prefigured there by Sara herself and her son. Accordingly, if figures are examined, all things that have been prophesied which have been realized or are expected to be realized by Christ are found there. But, nevertheless, because of certain precepts, not prefigured but real, which are found not in the Old but in the New Testament, I should have

2 Cf. *Against Adimantus* 3.4.
3 Cf. Matt. 5.21-22.
4 Cf. Matt. 5.3, 5.10, 5.20, 7.21, 18.3-4.
5 Cf. Exod. 19.3-6.
6 Cf. Gal. 4.22-31.

said more circumspectly and more carefully "almost no" rather than "no" [precepts and promises] are here. Moreover, there are there (i.e., in the Old Testament)[7] the two precepts of love of God and neighbor whereby everything concerning the Law, the Prophets, the Evangelists, and the Apostles is most rightly connected.

(3) Likewise, my statement: "The name of sons is interpreted in three ways in the Scriptures,"[8] was made without due consideration, for clearly we have, indeed, overlooked some other ways, such as the expressions: "son of hell"[9] or "adopted son,"[10] which, undoubtedly, are said not according to nature nor according to teaching nor according to imitation. We gave an example of these three ways as though they were the only ones: according to nature, as the Jews, "the children of Abraham";[11] according to teaching, as the Apostle calls his own sons those to whom he has taught the Gospel;[12] according to imitation, as we ourselves are the "sons of Abraham" whose faith we imitate.[13] Moreover, when I said: "When 'it puts on incorruption and immortality,'[14] it will no longer be flesh and blood,"[15] I meant that there will not be flesh according to the corruption of the flesh, nor according to the substance according to which also the body of the Lord was called flesh after the Resurrection.[16]

(4) In another place I said: "If a man does not change his will, he will not be able to effect the good which He, in another passage, teaches is in our power where He says, 'Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the

7 Cf. Lev. 19.18; Deut. 6.5; Matt. 5.43-44; 19.19; 22.37-39.
8 Cf. *Against Adimantus* 5.1.
9 Cf. Matt. 23.15.
10 Cf. Rom. 8.15; Gal. 4.5.
11 Cf. John 8.37.
12 Cf. 1 Cor. 4.14.
13 Cf. Gal. 3.7; Heb. 13.7.
14 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.54.
15 Cf. *Against Adimantus* 12.5.
16 Cf. Luke 24.39.

tree bad and its fruit bad.' "[17-18] This is not contrary to the grace of God as we teach. For it is in the power of man to change his will for the better; but this power is nothing if it is not given by God about whom it is said: "He gave them the power of becoming sons of God."[19] For since it is in our power to act when we will, there is nothing that is so much in our power as the will itself. But "the will is prepared by God."[20] In this way, then, He gives the power. And what I said later should be interpreted in the same way: "It is in our power to merit either to be planted by the goodness of God or to be cut down by His severity,"[21] because only what we accomplish by our will is in our power and when this "is prepared" strong and powerful "by the Lord,"[22] even a work of piety which has been difficult and impossible becomes easy.

This book begins thus: "With regard to what was written: 'In the beginning God made heaven and earth.' "[23]

NOTE. Within a period of approximately ten years, that is, from about 394 to 405, Augustine refuted four prominent Manichaeans: Manicheus or Mani, the founder, and Adimantus, both of the third century; Faustus and Secundinus, his contemporaries. We are here concerned with the first of these refutations, *Against Adimantus, a Disciple of Manichaeus,* composed about 394/395. In it, Augustine opposes Adimantus' contention that there is a contradiction between the writings of the Evangelists in the New Testament and those of the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament. He cites the words of Adimantus and to them opposes his own arguments. When, at a later date, he lost these replies, he made a second copy. Still later, the first copy reappeared. Because of the pressure of other work at this time, Augustine was forced to leave some questions unsolved and to answer others verbally in sermons delivered to the people (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

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17 Cf. *Against Adimantus* 26.1.
18 Cf. Matt. 12.33.
19 Cf. John 1.12; cf. *Retr.* 1.8.3.
20 Cf. Prov. 8.35 according to the Septuagint.
21 Cf. *Against Adimantus* 27.1.
22 Cf. Prov. 8.35 according to the Septuagint.
23 Cf. Gen. 1.1.

The prominent place occupied by Adimantus in the Manichaean party is attested in Augustine's treatise, *Against Faustus, the Manichaean,* where Faustus is said to consider the study of Adimantus second only to that of Manicheus (cf. *Against Faustus, the Manichaean* 1.2; *Retractations* 2.33). It seems that the arguments of Adimantus, designed to show that the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists were not in accord with the Law and the Prophets and which Augustine opposed in the present treatise, either were circulated only among certain people or were classed as secret by the Manichaeans for Augustine states that when they came into his hands, apparently by chance, he decided to refute them (cf. *Retractations, supra*). Though he did not complete this refutation, it is of sufficient length and the person against whom it is directed of such importance in the Manichaean sect that it is ranked among the significant polemics composed during the Manichaean controversy. It merits consideration, too, from an exegetical point of view.

Chapter 22

AN EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN PASSAGES FROM THE EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS

(Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos)

(1) While I was still a priest, we who were in Carthage at the same time happened to read the Epistle of the Apostle to the Romans and, after I, to the best of my ability, replied to certain questions asked me by some of my brethren, they wanted my reply put into writing rather than merely spoken. When I yielded to them, another book was added to my previous works.

In this book I said: "However, what he says, 'We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal,'[1] adequately shows that the Law can be fulfilled only by spiritual men, the kind

1 Cf. Rom. 7.14.

that the grace of God transforms,"[2-3] I certainly did not want this applied personally to the Apostle who was already spiritual, but to the man living "under the Law" but not yet "under grace."[4] For prior to this time, in this way I understood these words which, at a later date, after I had read certain commentators on the Sacred Scriptures whose authority moved me,[5] I reflected upon this more deeply and I saw that his own words can also be understood about the Apostle himself: "We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal." To the best of my ability, I have carefully showed this in those books which I recently wrote about the Pelagians.[6] In that book, then, and in the words, "but I am carnal," and then in what follows up to the place where he said: "Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord,"[7] I said that this describes the man still under the Law, not yet living under grace who wishes to do good, but, overcome by the lust of the flesh,[8] does evil. Only the "grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord"[9] by the gift of the Holy Spirit[10] frees from the domination of this lust, and the "charity . . . poured forth in our hearts"[11] through Him conquers the lusts of the flesh lest we yield to them to do evil but rather that we may do good. Hence, then, the Pelagian heresy is now overthrown,[12] which maintains that the charity whereby we live righteously and de-

2 Cf. *An Explanation of Certain Passages from the Epistle of the Apostle to the Romans* 41.
3 Cf. Rom. 1.11.
4 Cf. Rom. 6.14.
5 Cf. Cyprian, *De dominica oratione* 16; Ambrose, *De paenitentia* 1.3.
6 Cf. *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin* 43 (*Retr.* 2.76); *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.17-25 (*Retr.* 2.87); *Against Julian* 2.3, 6.23, 6.70 (*Retr.* 2.88) ; *An Unfinished Work against Julian* 1.99; *Sermon* 154. Cf. also *To Simplician* 1.1 (*Retr.* 1.23); *On the City of God* 22.21 (*Retr.* 2.69).
7 Cf. Rom. 24-25.
8 Cf. I John 2.16.
9 Cf. Rom. 7.25.
10 Cf. Acts 2.38.
11 Cf. Rom. 5.5.
12 Cf. *On Heresies* 88.

voutly is not [poured forth] from God in us, but from ourselves. But in those books which we have published against them, we have also showed that these words are more correctly understood also of the spiritual man already living under grace, because of the body of the flesh which is not yet spiritual, but will be at the resurrection of the dead; and because of the very lust of the flesh with which saintly persons are in conflict in such a way that, though they do not yield to it and do evil, yet in this life, they are not free from those movements which they resist by fighting against them.[13] They will not have them, however, in that life where "death" will be swallowed up "in victory."[14] Therefore, because of this lust and its movements which we resist in such a way that, nevertheless, they are in us, every saintly person already living "under grace" can say all those things which I have said are the words of the man not yet living "under grace," but "under the Law." It would take too long to explain this here and I have mentioned where I have explained it.[15]

(2) Likewise, when I was discussing what God chose in a man not yet born, whom He said his elder son would serve, and what He rejected in this elder son, likewise not yet born—in relation to whom, on that account, I called to mind the testimony of the prophet, although it was uttered a long time afterwards: "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated"[16]—I continued my explanation up to the point where I said: "God, then, in His foreknowledge, has not chosen the works of any man which He himself would give, but in His foreknowledge, He has chosen faith as He has chosen him whom He foreknew would believe in Him and to whom He would give the Holy Spirit so that, by performing good

13 Cf. *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.10; 1.17 (*Retr.* 2.87); *On the Perfection of the Justice of Man* 11.28 (this work is not reviewed in the *Retractations*); *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin* 39; 43 (*Retr.* 2.76).
14 Cf. 1 Cor. 54-55.
15 Cf. *Retr.* 1.22.1.
16 Cf. Rom. 9.12-13.

works, he would obtain eternal life."[17] I had not yet sought diligently enough or discovered up to this time what is the nature of "the election of grace," concerning which the same Apostle says: "There is a remnant [of the Israelites] left selected out of grace."[18] This certainly is not grace if any merits precede it; indeed then, what is given not according to grace, but according to debt, is given for merits rather than bestowed. Hence, I should not have written what I said immediately afterwards: "In fact, the same Apostle says, 'The same God who works all things in all';[19] but it has not been said anywhere: 'God believes all things in all' "; and then I added: "What we believe, therefore, is ours; but what we do well is His who gives the Spirit to those who believe,"[20] if, at the time, I knew that this faith also is found among the gifts of God which are given "in the same Spirit."[21] Both are ours, then, because of free choice of will, and both, moreover, have been given because of a "spirit of faith"[22] and charity. And charity is not alone, but as is written: "love with faith from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ."[23]

(3) And what I said shortly afterwards: "For it is ours to believe and will, but His to give to those who believe and will, the power of doing good 'through the Holy Spirit' through whom 'charity is poured forth in our hearts,' "[24-25] is, indeed, true; but, by virtue of this rule, both are His, because He himself "prepares the will,"[26] and ours, also, because we do only what we will. For this reason, too, what I also said at a later time is certainly very true: "We cannot

17 Cf. *An Explanation of Certain Passages from the Epistle of the Apostle to the Romans* 60 (*Retr.* 1.22); cf. *On the Predestination of the Saints* 1.3.
18 Cf. Rom. 11.5.
19 Cf. 1 Cor. 12.6.
20 Cf. *An Explanation of Certain Passages from the Epistle to the Romans* 60.
21 Cf. 1 Cor. 12.9.
22 Cf. 2 Cor. 4.13.
23 Cf. Eph. 6.23.
24 Cf. *An Explanation* . . . 61.
25 Cf. Rom. 5.5.
26 Cf. Prov. 8.35 according to the Septuagint.

will if we are not called, and when, after the call, we have willed, our will and our course do not suffice if God does not give strength to the runners and lead whither He calls"; and then I added: "It is clear, therefore, that it is 'not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God showing mercy'[27] that we do good."[28] But I said little about the call itself which is given according to the purpose of God;[29] for this is not true of all who are called, but only of the elect. And so what I said a little later, I said most truly: "For just as in those 'whom God has chosen,'[30] (not works, but) faith initiates merit so that they do good through the gift of God, so in those whom He condemns, infidelity and impiety initiate the penalty of chastisement, so that they also do evil because of the very penalty."[31] But that the merit of faith itself is also a gift of God, I did not think should be inquired into, nor did I say it.

(4) And in another place, I said: "For him on whom He has mercy He causes to do good and him 'whom He hardeneth,'[32] He abandons to do evil. But, indeed, this mercy is given to the preceding merit of faith and this hardness to the preceding impiety."[33] This is certainly true, but it was still necessary to question whether the merit of faith, too, comes from the mercy of God, that is, whether this mercy, then, is shown only to a man because he is faithful; or whether, in truth, it is shown that he may become faithful. For we read what the Apostle says: "As one having obtained mercy to be trustworthy";[34] he does not say, "because I was trustworthy." It is, therefore, in truth, given to a trustworthy man, but it has been given, also, so that he may become trustworthy. Very correctly, then, I have said in another

27 Cf. Rom. 9.16.
28 Cf. *An Explanation* . . . 62.
29 Cf. Rom. 9.11.
30 Cf. Mark 13.20; Acts 1.2.
31 Cf. *An Explanation* . . . 62.
32 Cf. Rom. 9.18.
33 Cf. *An Explanation* . . . 62.
34 Cf. 1 Cor. 7.25.

place in the same book: "Since if, in truth, we are called, not according to our works, but by the mercy of God to believe, and it is granted to those who believe to do good, we should not envy the Gentiles this mercy."[35] However, there I did not discuss with sufficient care that call which is given according to the purpose of God.

This book begins thus: "These ideas are in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans."

NOTE. The treatise, *An Explanation of Certain Passages from the Epistle of the Apostle to the Romans*, the first of Augustine's three commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul, is a record of the author's answers to the questions of his brethren during their reading of the Epistle to the Romans while on a visit to Carthage. At the request of Augustine's associates and with his approval, these replies were put into writing about 394. Thus the present work was added to the several composed by Augustine during his priesthood.

At about the same time, he also wrote an unfinished commentary on this same Epistle (cf. *Retractations* 1.24), and completed one on the Epistle to the Galatians (*ibid.* 1.23). These are not only a contribution to the progress of exegesis during this early period of the Church, but also a record of Augustine's part in it and of his continued interest in the writings of St. Paul, whose words played so important a part in his conversion (cf. *Confessions* 7.21.27; 8.12.29).

Chapter 23

ONE BOOK, AN EXPLANATION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

(Expositio epistulae ad Galatas liber unus)

(1) After this book, I explained the same Apostle's Epistle to the Galatians, not in part, that is, omitting some portions, but in a continuous fashion and in its entirety. Furthermore, I compressed this explanation into one volume.

35 Cf. *An Explanation . . .* 64.

In this book, I made the statement: "The first apostles, who were sent not by men but by God through a man, Jesus Christ that is, while He was still mortal, spoke the truth; but the last apostle who was sent by Jesus Christ now wholly God after His Resurrection also spoke the truth."[1] The expression, "now wholly God," was used because of the immortality which He began to possess after the Resurrection, not because of His divinity, ever immortal, from which He was never separated, and in which He was wholly God, even though He was still destined to die. Moreover, the following words which I added clearly show this meaning: "The first are the other apostles sent by Christ, still man in part, that is, mortal; the last is the apostle Paul sent by Jesus Christ now wholly God, that is, entirely immortal." For I said what the Apostle himself says: " (sent) not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father," as if Jesus Christ now were no longer man. Indeed, this follows: "who raised him from the dead"[2] that from this, his reason for saying "not by man" would be clear. Accordingly, because of His immortality the Christ God is now no longer man, but because of the substance of human nature in which "He ascended into heaven" is now, in truth, "Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,"[3] for He will come as those saw Him who saw Him "going up to heaven."[4]

(2) Likewise, what I said: "It is the grace of God by which our sins are forgiven that we may be reconciled with God; it is peace, however, by which we are reconciled with God,"[5] should be interpreted in such a way that, nevertheless, we realize also that both belong to the grace of God in general, just as among the people of God, one can distinguish separately Israel and Judah, and yet that both, in general, are Israel. Likewise, when I explained: "What then? The law

1 Cf. *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Galatians* 2.
2 Cf. Gal. 1.1.
3 Cf. 1 Tim. 2.5.
4 Cf. Acts 1.11.
5 Cf. *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Galatians* 3.

was enacted because of transgression," I thought that this should be separated, so that the question would be: "What, then?" and then the answer: "The law was enacted because of transgression."[6] This, indeed, is not contrary to the truth; but the following separation seems preferable to me: that the question be, "What then of the law?" and that the following answer be given: "It was enacted because of transgression."[7] Moreover, my statement: "And so he adds most appropriately, 'But if you are led by the Spirit, you are no longer under the law,'[8] so that we may understand that they are under the law whose spirit so lusts against the flesh that they do not do the things they will, that is, they do not keep themselves unconquered in the love of justice, but are conquered by the flesh lusting against them,"[9] was made according to the sense in which I understood the following passage, namely: "The flesh lusts against the spirit, the spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other so that you do not what you would,"[10] applicable to those who are "under the law" not yet "under grace."[11] For, up to this time, I had not yet realized that these words are also applicable to those who are "under grace" not "under the law" because they, too, lust after the lusts of the flesh against which they lust in spirit; even though they do not yield to them, yet they would not wish to have them if possible. Accordingly, they do not do whatsoever they wish, because they wish to be rid of them and cannot. For they will not have these lusts when they no longer have corruptible flesh.

This book begins as follows: "This is the Apostle's reason for writing the Epistle to the Galatians."

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6 *Ibid.* 24.
7 Cf. Gal. 3.19, where this reading is found; cf. also *Letter* 82.
8 Cf. Gal. 5.18.
9 Cf. *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Galatians* 47.
10 Cf. Gal. 5.17.
11 Cf. Rom. 6.14; Gal. 5.18.

NOTE. This work, *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Galatians,* written about 394, is the second in order of the three commentaries of Augustine on the Epistles of St. Paul reviewed by him in his *Retractations,* and the only one that deals with the Epistle to the Galatians (cf. *Retractations* 2.22). Unlike the other two treatises on the Epistle to the Romans, this commentary is complete though brief. Here, the author endeavors to explain every verse according to its literal meaning.

The three commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul were written during the last year or two of Augustine's priesthood. His sacerdotal duties, his writings on various subjects according to the needs of his people—among them his refutations of the Manichaeans and Donatists which the exigencies of the times demanded—the extent of St. Paul's writings, and, as a result, the labor required to interpret them fully and adequately (cf. *ibid.*), help to explain Augustine's limited exegesis of the Pauline Epistles (cf. *ibid.* 1.22, 1.23, and 1.24).

Chapter 24

ONE BOOK, AN UNFINISHED EXPLANATION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

(Epistulae ad Romanos incoata expositio, liber unus)

I had also undertaken an explanation of the Epistle to the Romans as of that to the Galatians. If it had been finished, there would be several books of this work. I completed one of these in a single discussion of his salutation, that is, from the beginning up to the place where he says: "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."[1] In fact, we happened to postpone this because we wanted to solve a most difficult question which occurs in our sermon, namely, the one dealing with the sin against the Holy Spirit[2] which "is not forgiven either in this world or

1 Cf. Rom. 1.7.

2 Cf. Sermon 71. Cf. *An Unfinished Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans* 14f.

in the world to come."[3] But later on, discouraged by the magnitude and labor of this task, I stopped adding other volumes to explain the entire Epistle, and I lapsed into easier things. And thus it happened that I left a single book, the first one I composed. I determined that its title should be: *An Unfinished Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans.*

Wherever I said: "Grace is in the remission of sins, but peace in reconciliation with God,"[4] in no instance did I wish this to be interpreted as though peace and reconciliation do not belong to grace in general, for, by the term *grace,* I meant in particular the remission of sins, just as, indeed, we also speak in particular of the Law according to the words: "the Law and the Prophets,"[5] and in general, so that in it [the Law] the Prophets are also included.[6]

This book begins thus: "In the Epistle which Paul the Apostle wrote to the Romans."

NOTE. About 394, Augustine began his second commentary on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans with the intention of expounding it in full as he had the Epistle to the Galatians (cf. *Retractations* 1.23), but, as the title clearly shows, *An Unfinished Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans,* he did not finish it. In fact, after explaining the first seven verses of the first chapter of this Epistle of more than four hundred verses (433), he discontinued the work, temporarily as he then thought, to solve the question of sin against the Holy Spirit which came up in one of his sermons (*Sermon* 71; cf. *An Unfinished Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans* 14-23). For reasons he himself gives, he did not resume this projected exposition: discouraged by its extensiveness and the labor involved, he slipped into less difficult undertakings (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

If we judge from the space devoted by Augustine to expounding the first seven verses of this important Epistle, and his own view of the immensity and difficulty of completing this exegesis, his plan to finish it would have made demands on his time and energy that he could not meet because of the other responsibilities unavoidably assumed during these years of his priesthood immediately prior to his episcopal consecration, or

3 Matt. 12.32.
4 Cf. *An Unfinished Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans* 23.
5 Cf. Matt. 22.40; Rom. 3.21.
6 Cf. Rom. 6.14; 1 Cor. 9.21.

later when his responsibilities, both episcopal and literary, increased (cf. *ibid.* 1.23 NOTE).

Chapter 25

ONE BOOK ON EIGHTY-THREE DIVERSE QUESTIONS

(De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus)

(1) Among our writings, there is also a certain lengthy work which, nevertheless, is considered one book, with the title *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions.* These questions had been scattered through many small pieces of writing because, from the very beginning of my conversion after we came into Africa, as I was questioned by my brethren whenever they saw that I had time, they were dictated without observing any orderly arrangement. When, then, I became a bishop, I ordered them to be collected and one book made of them, with numbers added so that anyone might easily find what he wanted to read.

(2) The first of these questions is: *Does the soul exist of itself?;* the second: *On free choice;* the third: *Is man more evil because God is his Creator?;* the fourth: *What is the reason for man's being more evil?;* the fifth: *Can a being who lacks reason be happy?;* the sixth: *On evil;* the seventh: *In an animated being, what is properly called the soul?;* the eighth: *Is it* [the soul] *moved by itself?;* the ninth: *Can truth be perceived by the bodily senses?* What I said on the last question: "Everything which the bodily sense touches, and which, in truth, is called sensible, changes without any interval of time,"[1] is certainly not true of the incorruptible bodies of the resurrection, and, indeed, at that time no sense of our body touches these things unless, perhaps, something of this kind be revealed from heaven.

1 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 9.

The tenth is: *Is the body from God?;* the eleventh: *Why was Christ born of a woman?* The twelfth, with its title: *The Opinion of a Certain Wise Man,* is not mine, but because it became known through me to certain of my brethren, who, at the time by chance, were considering these subjects most attentively, and were deriving pleasure from it, they wanted it recorded among my works. It is the writing of a certain Fonteus of Carthage: on purifying the spirit so that it may see God. He was a pagan when he wrote this, but he died a baptized Christian.

The thirteenth is: *By what proof is it established that man is superior to beasts?;* the fourteenth: *The body of our Lord Jesus was not a phantom;* the fifteenth: *On the intellect;* the sixteenth: *On the Son;* the seventeenth: *On knowledge of God;* the eighteenth: *On the Trinity;* the nineteenth: *On God and the creature;* the twentieth: *On the dwelling place of God;* the twenty-first: *Is God the creator of evil?* Care must be taken lest what I said there be understood incorrectly: "God is not the creator of evil because He is the Creator of all things which exist, because insofar as they exist, they are good,"[2] lest, indeed, it be concluded from this that the punishment of evildoers is not from Him. This, certainly, is an evil for those who are punished. But I said this as the following was said: "God made not death,"[3] although in another place, it is written: "Death and life are from the Lord God."[4] The punishment of evildoers which is from God, is, therefore, an evil for evildoers, but it is among the good works of God, since it is just to punish evildoers and, certainly, everything that is just is good.

The twenty-second is: *God does not suffer necessity;* the twenty-third is: *On the Father and the Son.* There I said: "that since He Himself had begotten Wisdom, from this He

2 *Ibid.* 21.
3 Cf. Wisd. 1.13.
4 Cf. Ecclus. (Sir.) 11.14.

is called wise."[5] However, later in a book on the Trinity, I treated this question better.[6]

The twenty-fourth is: *Are both sin and good action in free choice of the will?* It is entirely true that this is so, but in order that one be free to do good, he is freed by the grace of God.

The twenty-fifth is: *On the cross of Christ;* the twenty-sixth: *On the difference between sins;* the twenty-seventh: *On Providence;* the twenty-eighth: *Why did God want to create the world?;* the twenty-ninth: *Is there anything up or down in reference to the universe?;* the thirtieth: *Have all things been created for the use of man?* The thirty-first is not mine either, but Cicero's,[7] but because this text, too, became known to my brethren through me, they recorded it among the things they were collecting, because they wished to know how the virtues of the soul had been divided and defined by him.

The thirty-second is: *Does one individual understand a certain thing better than another and does the comprehension of this same thing thus go on endlessly?* The thirty-third is: *On fear;* the thirty-fourth: *Must not something besides an absence of fear be loved?;* the thirty-fifth: *What must be loved?* What I said on this question, namely: "That must be loved, to possess which is nothing else than to know it,"[8] I do not entirely approve. For they, about whom the following is said did not possess God: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"[9] They, however, either did not know Him or they did not know Him as He should be known.

Likewise, I said: "No one, then, knows the happy life and is unhappy."[10] I said "knows" with the meaning "as it ought

5 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 23.
6 Cf. *On the Trinity* 6.2.3.
7 Cf. Cicero, *De inventione* 2.53.159-2.54.165.
8 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 35.1.
9 Cf. I Cor. 3.16.
10 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 35.1.

to be known." For who, at least among those who already have the use of reason, are completely ignorant of this life since they know they wish to be happy?[11]

The thirty-sixth: *On fostering charity,* where I said: "When, therefore, God and the soul are loved, this is called love for its own sake, most pure and perfect love if nothing else is loved."[12] But if this is true, in what sense did the Apostle say: "No one ever hated his own flesh,"[13] and, for this reason, he exhorts them to love their wives.[14] Hence, I said: "This is called love for its own sake since the flesh, in truth, is loved, not for its own sake, but because of the soul which suffices for its need. For even though it seems to be loved for its own sake, since we do not want it to be without beauty, its beauty should be attributed to something else, that is, without a doubt, to that from which all beautiful things come.

The thirty-seventh is: *On Him who is always born;* the thirty-eighth: *On the structure of the soul;* the thirty-ninth: *On nourishment;* the fortieth: *Although the nature of souls is one, whence are the many wills of men?;* the forty-first: *Whereas God has made all things, why has He not made them uniformly;* the forty-second: *How the wisdom of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, was both in the womb of His mother and in heaven;* the forty-third: *Why the Son of God appeared as a man and the Holy Spirit as a dove;*[15] the forty-fourth: *Why our Lord Jesus Christ came after so long a delay.* Here, when I recalled the ages of the human race as though they were the ages of an individual man, I said: "It was not necessary for the Master, by whose imitation one is disposed toward the best ways of life, to come from heaven except during the time of youth,"[16] and to give force to this, I added the words of the Apostle: "Guarding children under the law as under

11 Cf. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.10.28.
12 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 36.1.
13 Cf. Eph. 5.29.
14 Cf. Eph. 5.25; Col. 3.19.
15 Cf. Matt. 3.16.
16 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 44.

a tutor."[17] But the question may well be raised why we have said in another place that Christ came in the sixth age of the human race, as it were, in its old age.[18] What was said about youth, however, refers to the vigor and intensity of faith "which works through love,"[19] but what was said about old age, to the number of ages of time. For one can understand both [of these] in regard to men as a whole, which can be done also in regard to the ages of individual men. But it is impossible for youth and old age to be in the body at the same time, but this is possible in the soul; the one because of its lightness, the other because of its heaviness.

The forty-fifth is: *Against astrologers;* the forty-sixth is: *On ideas;* the forty-seventh is: *Can we at times see our thoughts?* There I said: "We ought to believe that angelic bodies, such as we hope to have, are very lucid and ethereal."[20] If this be understood about bodies without the members which we now have and without substance, though incorruptible yet of flesh, it is an error. But this question of seeing our thoughts is dealt with in a much better way in the work, *On the City of God.*[21]

The forty-eighth: *On credible things;* the forty-ninth: *Why the sons of Israel visibly sacrificed animal victims;* the fiftieth: *On the equality of the Son;* the fifty-first: *On man made "to the image and likeness of God."*[22] What is the meaning of what I said there: "In truth, is not a living being rightly called a man,"[23] since even the corpse of a man is called a man? At least, then, I should have said, "is not . . . *properly* called" where I said, "is not . . . *rightly* called."

17 Cf. Gal. 3.24-26.
18 Cf. *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.23.40; *Retr.* 1.9.
19 Cf. Gal. 5,6.
20 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 47.
21 Cf. *On the City of God* 22.29.
22 Cf. Gen. 1.26; 5.3.
23 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 51.3. Here, as elsewhere in the *Retractations,* there is a difference between the reading in the CSEL and that of the Maurists (CSEL: *scilicet,* "in truth"; Maurists: *sine,* "without"). Hence, *vita* here means "a living being."

Likewise, I said: "It is not without reflection that one distinguishes between what *the image and likeness of God* is on the one hand, and what *to the image and likeness of God* is on the other, inasmuch as we have understood that man was made to the image."[24] This is not to be interpreted as if man is not called the image of God, for the Apostle says: "A man, indeed, ought not to cover his head because he is the image and glory of God."[25] But, "to the image of God" is also said because the Only-begotten Son who alone is the image, not "*to* the image," is not meant.

The fifty-second is: *On what is written: "It repenteth me that I made man";*[26] the fifty-third: *On the gold and silver which the Israelites received from the Egyptians;*[27] the fifty-fourth: *On the words: "It is good for me to adhere to God."*[28] My statement there: "Therefore, what is better than any soul, we call God,"[29] should rather be expressed: "better than any created spirit."

The fifty-fifth: *On that which is written: "There are three-score queens and four-score concubines, and young maidens without number."*[30] The fifty-sixth: *On the forty-six years of the building of the temple;*[31] the fifty-seventh: *On the one hundred fifty-three fishes;*[32] the fifty-eighth: *On John the Baptist;* the fifty-ninth: *On the ten virgins;*[33] the sixtieth: *"But of the day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father only";*[34] the sixty-first: *On that which is written in the Gospel, namely, that the Lord fed the multitudes on the mountain with five loaves.*[35] What I

24 *Ibid.* 51.4; cf. *On the Trinity* 7.6.12.
25 Cf. 1 Cor. 11.7.
26 Cf. Gen. 6.6.
27 Cf. Exod. 3.22; 12.35.
28 Cf. Ps. 72.28.
29 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 54.
30 Cf. Cant. 6.7.
31 Cf. John 2.20.
32 Cf. John 21.11.
33 Cf. Matt. 25.1.
34 Cf. Matt. 24.36.
35 Cf. Matt. 14.13-21.

said there: "The two fishes symbolize those two persons, namely, one royal, the other sacerdotal, to whom, indeed, that sacred anointing was applicable,"[36] should rather have been expressed: "was *especially* applicable," since we read that Prophets, too, were sometimes anointed.[37] Likewise, I said: "Luke, who has presented Christ as a priest, ascending into heaven after remitting sins, goes back through Nathan to David,[38] because Nathan the Prophet had been sent to David, who, after Nathan's rebuke, did penance and received the remission of his sins."[39-40] This is not to be interpreted as if it were Nathan the Prophet who was the son of David, for I did not say here that he had been sent as a prophet, but I said, "that Nathan the Prophet had been sent," so that that enigma is perceived, not in relation to the same man, but in relation to the same name.

The sixty-second pertains to *what is written in the Gospel, that "Jesus baptized more persons than John, although He himself did not baptize but His disciples."*[41] What I said there: "That thief who had not yet received this baptism, to whom it was said, 'Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise,' "[42-43] we have found, in truth, that other leaders of Holy Church before us have also stated this in their writings,[44] but I do not know by what proofs it can be shown that that thief had not been baptized. In certain later works of ours, especially in the one that we addressed to Vincentius Victor on the origin of the soul, this subject has been more carefully discussed.[45]

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36 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 61.2.
37 Cf. 3 Kings 19.16; Isa. 61.1.
38 Cf. Luke 3.23-38.
39 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 61.2.
40 Cf. 2 Kings 12.1; 12.13.
41 Cf. John 4.1-3.
42 Cf. Luke 23.43.
43 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 62.
44 Cf. Cyprian, *Letter* 74; Ambrose, *On Repentance (De paenitentia)* 11; Hilary, *On the Trinity (De Trinitate)* 10.35; Hilary, *Commentary on the Psalms (Tractatus in Psalmos)* 1.9; 66.26.
45 Cf. *On the Origin of the Soul* 3.9.12.

The sixty-third is: *On the Word;* the sixty-fourth: *On the Samaritan woman;*[46] the sixty-fifth: *On the resurrection of Lazarus;*[47] the sixty-sixth: *On that which is written: "Do you not know, brethren,—for I speak to those who know law—that the Law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?"*[48] *up to the place where this is written: " . . . will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of His Spirit who dwells in you."*[49] Here, wishing to explain what the Apostle says: "For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am carnal,"[50] I said: "That is, I yield to the flesh because I am not yet freed by spiritual grace."[51] This should not be so understood as though the spiritual man already living "under grace"[52] cannot say this also about himself; I learned this afterwards as I have already stated previously;[53] and similarly for the rest up to the place where the following is said: "Unhappy man, who will deliver me from the body of his death?"[54]

Again, when I was explaining these words of the Apostle: "The body, it is true, is dead by reason of sin,"[55] I said: "He says that the body is dead as long as it is such that a lack of temporal things disturbs the soul."[56] But later, the following explanation seemed better to me than that: the body is said to be dead because it now has the necessity to die, which it did not have before the sin.[57]

The sixty-seventh is: *On that which is written: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed*

46 Cf. John 4.9.
47 Cf. John 11.44.
48 Cf. Rom. 7.1.
49 Cf. Rom. 8.11.
50 Cf. Rom. 7.14.
51 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 66.5.
52 Cf. Rom. 6.14.
53 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 66.6; *Retr.* 1.22.2.
54 Cf. Rom. 7.24.
55 Cf. Rom. 8.10.
56 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 66.6.
57 Cf. *On the Consequences and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Little Children* 1.7.7 (*Retr.* 2.59); *On the Trinity* 4.3.5; *Discourses on the Psalms* 85.17.

in us"[58] *as far as the words: "For in hope were we saved."*[59] Here, when I was explaining what is written: "The creature itself also will be delivered from its slavery to death,"[60] I said: "The creature itself also, that is, man himself, since now, because the likeness to the image has been lost by sin, has remained only a creature."[61] This should not be interpreted as though man has entirely lost the image of God he possessed, for if he had entirely lost it, there would be no reason to say: "Be transformed in the newness of your mind,"[62] and: "We are being transformed into His very image."[63] And again, if he had entirely lost the image, nothing would remain whence this could be said: "Although man walks as an image yet his worrying is in vain."[64]

Likewise, my statement: "The highest angels live a spiritual life, the lowest like an animal,"[65] was made more rashly about the lowest angels than can be proved either by the Holy Scripture or by the facts themselves, because even if, perchance, it could be proved, it could be done only with the greatest difficulty.

The sixty-eighth is: *On that which is written: "O man, who art thou to reply to God?"*[66] Here, I said: "When anyone in the case of less serious sins, or even in that of more serious and numerous sins as well, by repeated lamentations and the sorrow of repentance *becomes* deserving of the grace of God, this is not to be ascribed to him—who, if he had been abandoned, would have perished—but to a compassionate God who comes to the aid of his prayers and sorrow. For will is not enough if God is not merciful; but God who invites to peace will not be merciful if the will does not precede to

58 Cf. Rom. 8.18.
59 Cf. Rom. 8.24.
60 Cf. Rom. 8.21.
61 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 67.4.
62 Cf. Rom. 12.2.
63 Cf. 2 Cor. 3.18.
64 Cf. Ps. 38.7.
65 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 67.5.
66 Cf. Rom. 9.20.

peace."[67] This means after repentance. For it is the mercy of God which precedes even the will itself. If this were absent, "the will would not be prepared by the Lord";[68] and the call itself which precedes even faith pertains to this mercy.[69] When I was discussing this a little later, I said: "But this call, which operates either in individual men or in peoples and in the human race itself through the opportunities of the times, will be of a high and profound order."[70] To this, the following is also applicable: "I sanctified you in the womb,"[71] and: "When you were in the loins of your father I saw you,"[72] and: "I have loved Jacob, but have hated Esau,"[73] although I do not know how the following affirmation occurred to me as though it were written [in Holy Scripture]: "When you were in the loins of your father I saw you."

The sixty-ninth: *On that which is written: "Then the Son himself will also be made subject to Him who subjected all things to Him."*[74] The seventieth: *On that which the Apostle says: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy struggle? O death, where is thy sting? Now the sting of death is sin, but the power of sin is the Law!"*[75] The seventy-first: *On that which is written: "Bear your burdens for one another, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ";*[76] the seventy-second: *On eternal times;* the seventy-third: *On that which is written: "And in habit found as a man";*[77] the seventy-fourth: *On that which is written in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians: "In whom we have redemption . . . for the remission of sins, who is the image of the invisible*

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67 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 68.5.
68 Cf. Prov. 8.35, according to the Septuagint.
69 Cf. *Retr.* 1.22.4.
70 Cf. *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 68.6.
71 Cf. Jer. 1.5.
72 The source of this passage is not known. Note what Augustine himself says two or three lines below.
73 Cf. Mal. 1.2-3.
74 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.28.
75 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.54-56.
76 Cf. Gal. 6.2.
77 Cf. Phil. 2.7.

God";[78] the seventy-fifth: *On the heritage of God;* the seventy-sixth: *On that which the Apostle James says: "But dost thou want to know, O senseless man, that faith without good works is useless?";*[79] the seventy-seventh: *Whether fear is a sin;* the seventy-eighth: *On the beauty of images;* the seventy-ninth: *Why have the magicians of Pharao performed miracles as did Moses, the servant of God?;*[80] the eightieth: *Against the Apollinarists;* the eighty-first: *On the fortieth and fiftieth;* the eighty-second: *On that which is written: "For whom the Lord loves, he rebukes; but he scourges every son whom he receives";*[81] the eighty-third: *On marriage.*

This work begins as follows: "Does the soul exist of itself?"

NOTE. This comparatively long work, *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions,* is a collection of answers given by Augustine to questions on exegetical, dogmatic, and philosophical problems proposed by his "brethren," presumably those who shared his monastic life at Tagaste and Hippo Regius, during conversations held from the time of his return to Africa about 388, until his episcopacy about 395 or 396. Fortunately, these solutions were dictated and preserved. After Augustine became a bishop, he found these recorded conversations scattered among other works and had them assembled into a single volume of one book, and numbered for the convenience of those who would consult them (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

Exclusive of their numerical arrangement, the questions do not have an overall logical order. There is, however, in certain places a grouping of related questions: for example, an opening group of questions which deal with philosophical problems, while, later on, several exegetical questions are arranged in continuity (52-76). Two questions, one based on the work of a certain Fonteus of Carthage (12) and one (31) on a work of Cicero (cf. Cicero, *De inventione* 2.53.159), as well as those that deal with Plato's theory of ideas (46), the will (40), the creation of the soul of man (1), and others in the philosophical field, are especially deserving of mention.

This compilation of the opinions of Augustine from the beginning of his monastic life through his priesthood is of special interest as far as a study of the progress of his thought

78 Cf. Col. 1.14-15.
79 Cf. James 2.20.
80 Cf. Exod. 7.11; 7.22; 8.1; 8.7.
81 Cf. Heb. 12.6.

is concerned. It shows a marked advance in his knowledge and interpretation of Holy Scripture, in doctrine, and in relating Christian to Platonic thought.

Chapter 26

ONE BOOK ON LYING

(De mendacio liber unus)

I also wrote a book, *On Lying,* which, even though the understanding of it requires a certain amount of effort is, nevertheless, a useful aid to the spirit and mind and, to a greater extent, helps one's nature to love truth. I had decided to remove this book also from my works because to me it seemed vague, complicated, and entirely irksome; and for this reason, I had not even published it. Then, when, at a later time, I had written a second book entitled *Against Lying,*[1] I was much more determined that this earlier work was not to survive and I gave an order to that effect, but it was not carried out. Hence, when, during the present review of my works, I found it intact, I ordered it to be preserved after it was reviewed, especially since in it there are some important things that are not in the second work. The title of the second work is, then, *Against Lying,* but of this, *On Lying;* this is because throughout the second work there is an overt attack on lying, while a great part of the present work is devoted to a discussion of the subject as such. Both, however, are directed toward the same end.

This book begins thus: "In the matter of lying there is an important question."

NOTE. This book, *On Lying,* composed about 394/395, is the last work of Augustine written during his priesthood. Because

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.86 and NOTE.

of its obscurity, intricacy, and irksomeness, Augustine did not immediately release it (cf. *Retractations, supra*). In fact, at a later time, about 420, after he wrote a second work on the same subject, *Against Lying* (cf. *ibid.* 2.86), he decided to consign this earlier work to oblivion and gave orders to this effect, but they were not carried out. Still later, when he was writing his *Retractations (ca.* 426/427), he came upon this work and reversed his former decision not to publish it, because in it he found some important points that were not in his later work, *Against Lying.* We owe the preservation of this moral treatise, therefore, to the failure of others to carry out Augustine's orders and to his own subsequent resolve to preserve it.

This work is a discussion on the ever-recurring and troublesome problem of Augustine's day relative to lying, namely, the possibility of rashly and unjustly calling something a lie and the permissibility of telling a well-intentioned lie (cf. *On Lying* 1.1). It deals with the solution of various problems connected with lying, whereas the author's later work, *Against Lying,* is a direct attack on lying as such (cf. *Retractations* 2.86).

BOOK TWO

Chapter 27

TWO BOOKS, TO SIMPLICIAN

(Ad Simplicianum libri duo)

The first two books which I wrote as a bishop are addressed to Simplician,[1] bishop of the Church in Milan who succeeded the most blessed Ambrose.[2] They deal with various questions. I put into the first book the two on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans. The first of these is on the passage: "What shall we say, then? Is the Law sin? By no means!"[3] up to the place where he says: "Who will deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."[4] In this question,[5] the words of the Apostle: "The Law is spiritual, but I am carnal,"[6] and other words where he shows that the flesh wars against the spirit, I have explained as though he were describing a man still "under the law" and not yet living "under grace."[7] Long afterwards, to be sure, I thought—and this is more probable—that these words could also refer to the spiritual man.[8]

1 Cf. *On the Predestination of the Saints* 4.8 and *On the Gift of Perseverance* 20.52, where Augustine comments on this work.
2 Cf. *Confessions* 8.1.1.
3 Cf. Rom. 7.7.
4 Cf. Rom. 7.24-25.
5 Cf. *To Simplician* 1.1.7-1.1.9.
6 Cf. Rom. 7.14.
7 Cf. Rom. 6.14.
8 Cf. *Retr.* 1.22.1.

Later in this book, the second question deals with the passage where the Apostle says: "Not she [Sara] only, but Rebecca also who conceived by one man Isaac our father,"[9] up to where he says: "Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a posterity, we should have become as Sodom, and should have been like Gomorrah."[10] In the solution of this question,[11] I, indeed, labored in defense of the free choice of the human will; but the grace of God conquered, and finally I was able to understand, with full clarity, the meaning of the Apostle: "For who singles thee out? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it?"[12] Cyprian, the martyr, too, wishing to show this, embraced all this under the heading: "We should glory in nothing since we have nothing in which to glory."[13]

In the second book, the other questions are treated and are solved to the best of our ability, howsoever insignificant; all are taken from the part of Scripture which is called "of Kings." The first of these is: *On what is written: "And the spirit of the Lord came upon Saul,"*[14] *although, in another place, this is said: "And an evil spirit of the Lord . . . upon Saul."*[15] When I was explaining this, I said: "Although what he wills is in the power of every man, nevertheless, what he can do is not in the power of every man."[16] This was said, then, because we do not say that a thing is in our power unless, when we will, it is done; for this reason, willing itself

9 Cf. Rom. 9.10.
10 Cf. Rom. 9.29.
11 Cf. *On the City of God* 16.33-35.
12 Cf. 1 Cor. 4.7.
13 Cf. Cyprian, *Three Books of Testimonies, to Quirinus (Testimoniorum Libri III, ad Quirinum).* Cf. B. Altaner, *Patrology* 196; J. Quasten, *Patrology* II 362-363.
14 Cf. 1 Kings 10.10.
15 Cf. 1 Kings 16.14. The difference between the Vulgate reading *(a domino)* and that of Augustine *(domini)* is noteworthy. Here, as often elsewhere, Augustine takes words from Scripture and adapts them to his ideas rather than to the parts of Scripture that precede and follow the excerpts.
16 Cf. *To Simplician* 2.1.4.

is first and foremost. For without an interval of time, the will itself is present instantly when we will;[17] but we also receive from above the power to live rightly when "the will is prepared by the Lord."[18]

The second question is: *On the meaning of the words: "It repenteth me that I have made Saul king."*[19] The third: *Was it possible for the unclean spirit which was in the sorceress to cause Samuel to appear to Saul and speak to him?*[20] The fourth: *On what is written: "King David entered and sat before the Lord."*[21] The fifth: *On the words of Elias: "O Lord, I am a witness of this widow with whom I am living; you have done evil by killing her son."*[22]

This work begins thus: "Most pleasant, in truth, and most sweet."

NOTE. The present work, *To Simplician,* is Augustine's first literary production after he became Bishop of Hippo Regius. It was written about 396, in response to questions on the interpretation of certain passages in Holy Scripture submitted to him by Simplician, who, in 397, succeeded St. Ambrose as Bishop of Milan. The first book contains the answer to two questions about passages from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Romans 7.7-25 and 9.10-29), and the second book answers five questions on the interpretation of passages from the Books of Kings (1 Kings 10.10; 16.14. 1 Kings 15.11. 1 Kings 28.7-20. 2 Kings 7-18. 3 Kings 17.20).

In the *Confessions* (8.2.3), Augustine tells us that he consulted Simplician, the spiritual father of St. Ambrose (by whom the latter may have been baptized), and related to him the error of his ways. Simplician, far from discouraging Augustine's study of the works of the Platonists, told him that in them "God and His Word" are everywhere, either implied or introduced. Then, he told Augustine the story of the conversion of Victorinus, the rhetorician, in order to induce him to accept the humility of Christ. This story of the African who told Simplician that he had been convinced of the truth of the Christian religion by reading the Scripture and the writings of the Christ-

17 Cf. *Confessions* 8.8.20.
18 Cf. Prov. 8.35 according to the Septuagint.
19 Cf. 1 Kings 15.11.
20 Cf. 1 Kings 28.7-20.
21 Cf. 2 Kings 7.18.
22 Cf. 3 Kings 17.20.

ians deeply moved Augustine (cf. Altaner, *op. cit.* 490-491). From that time on, there was a strong bond between Simplician and Augustine, an attachment more firmly welded by the help Simplician gave Augustine during this time of mental and spiritual struggle and indecision. No doubt, it gave Augustine pleasure to repay in some measure his debt to Simplician by responding to his request for a solution of exegetical problems.

In addition to his present review of this exegetical treatise in his *Retractations,* Augustine refers to this work in two other treatises of his, *On the Eight Questions to Dulcitius,* written about 422 or 425, and *On the Predestination of the Saints,* written 428 or 429. In the second of these works, he gives a brief summary of his views on faith and grace as expressed in the present work, recommends the reading of it to his brethren, and mentions his treatment of it in his *Retractations.*

The first book of this commentary on passages from St. Paul and the Books of Kings is especially important because it contains Augustine's position on grace. This is regarded as "the true Augustinian view " and one which he held to the end of his life, as we know from the *Retractations,* in which we find neither a modification nor correction of it.

Chapter 28

ONE BOOK, AGAINST THE LETTER OF MANI WHICH IS CALLED "THE FOUNDATION"

(Contra epistulam Manichei, quam vocant Fundamenti, liber unus)

The book, *Against the Letter of Mani which is Called "the Foundation,"*[1] refuted only the beginning of that letter; but in its other parts, wherever it seemed best, I added notes which refute it in its entirety and which would be suggestive

1 This so-called "Foundation Letter" is not extant. The fact that Augustine, in his refutation of it, wrote against the principal doctrines of the Manichaeans, seems to indicate that it was a sort of handbook or enchiridion designed for persons, either beginners or auditors, who were being instructed in Manichaeism.

to me if, at some time, I should have leisure to write against the whole letter.

This book begins thus: "One true, omnipotent God."

NOTE. About the time Augustine answered Simplician's questions concerning certain passages of Holy Scripture, that is, about 396/397, he wrote a work, *Against a Letter of Mani which is Called "the Foundation."* This so-called "Foundation Letter" of Mani was, in reality, a treatise, not a letter. For lack of time, Augustine argued against the first part of this treatise only, but made notes on the rest of it, memoranda, so to speak, in case the opportunity to refute the entire Letter would eventually present itself *(Retractations, supra).*

The letter-treatise of Mani contained the fundamental doctrines of Manichaeism: "Let us see, then, what Mani teaches me; and particularly, let us examine the treatise which he calls the 'Foundation Letter,' in which all you believe is contained" (cf. trans. by R. Stother, NPN 4.130-131). Felix, in his argument against Augustine (cf. *Acts with Felix* 2.1), refers to this Letter as "the beginning, the middle, the end." It was, perhaps, a manual for the use of the uninitiated. But since we know it only by title and through Augustine's refutation of it, we cannot be certain of this.

In his polemic against it, Augustine attacks moderately, but at times sharply, the Manichaean teaching on creation and the origin of evil. In it, we find, too, Augustine's statement regarding the Gospel's dependence on the authority of the Catholic Church.

Chapter 29

ONE BOOK ON THE CHRISTIAN COMBAT

(De agone <Christiano> liber unus)

The book, *On the Christian Combat,* which contains the rule of faith and precepts for living, was written in simple language for the brethren who were poorly versed in the Latin tongue. In this book, I wrote: "Let us not listen to

those who deny the future resurrection of the flesh and who mention the words of Paul the Apostle: 'Flesh and blood will not possess the kingdom of God,'[1] failing to understand what the same Apostle says: 'This corruptible body must put on incorruption and this mortal body must put on immortality';[2] for when this has come to pass, there will no longer be flesh and blood, but a heavenly body."[3] This is not to be interpreted as if the substance of the flesh will no longer exist; but, by the term flesh and blood, we are to understand that the Apostle meant the corruption itself of flesh and blood which, certainly, will not exist in that kingdom where the flesh will be incorruptible.[4] However, this can also be construed in another way, namely, that we understand that by flesh and blood the Apostle meant the works of flesh and blood, and that they who love these works persistently will not possess the kingdom of God.

This work begins thus: "The crown of victory."

NOTE. In his treatise, *On Christian Combat,* written about 396, Augustine manifests concern for the common people by using a style and language suited to those among them who were not well versed in the Latin tongue. In an earlier work, a poem, the so-called "Abecedarian Psalm," he is also careful to choose "modes of expression" *(locutiones)* comprehensible to simple people. (Cf. *Retractations* 1.19 NOTE).

The present treatise is the third discussed by Augustine in his *Retractations* after he became a bishop. It deals with the Christian's combat or struggle against the devil and sin, a topic which may have been suggested to its author and other early Christian writers by St. Paul (cf. 2 Tim. 1.12; 4.7). According to Augustine, this work "contains a way of life and precepts for living" *(Retractations, supra).* It may be termed a manual or handbook, for in it are found the principal articles of faith, together with a refutation of the heresies or errors against which faith is to be defended. The heresy in question and its founder are specifically mentioned in only a few instances.

1 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.50.
2 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.53.
3 Cf. *On Christian Combat* 32.34.
4 Cf. *Retr.* 1.16.2; *On the City of God* 22.5; 22.21.

This brief work is often classed with two other moral-dogmatic treatises of Augustine, namely, *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* (cf. *ibid.* 2.89) and *On Christian Instruction* (cf. *ibid.* 2.30).

In the *Retractations (supra),* in addition to stating the purpose of this interesting work, Augustine warns against the heretical denial of the resurrection of the flesh and, in refutation of it, expounds passages of Holy Scripture used by heretics to support their false teachings.

Chapter 30

FOUR BOOKS ON CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION

(De doctrina Christiana libri quattuor)

(1) When I discovered that the books, *On Christian Instruction,* were not completed, I chose to finish them rather than leave them as they were and go on to the reexamination of other works. Accordingly, I completed the third book which had been written up to the place where mention is made of a passage from the Gospel[1] about the woman who "buried leaven in three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."[2] I then added a last book and thus completed this work in four books. The first three of these are a help to the understanding of the Scriptures, while the fourth explains how we are to present what we understand.

(2) In the second book, however, with regard to the author of the book which many call the Wisdom of Solomon, I learned later that it is not certain that Jesus, the son of Sirach, wrote this as well as Ecclesiasticus, as I stated;[3] and I found out that it is, indeed, more probable that he is not its author.

1 Cf. *On Christian Instruction* 3.25.35-36.
2 Cf. Luke 13.21.
3 Cf. *On Christian Instruction* 2.8.13.

Furthermore, when I said: "The authority of the Old Testament is confined to these forty-four books,"[4] I spoke of it according to the way in which the Church customarily speaks of it. However, the Apostle seems to give the title "Old Testament" only to that which was given on Mount Sinai.[5] Furthermore, my memory deceived me when I said: "Holy Ambrose has solved the question of the history of the times"[6] —just as though Plato and Jeremia were contemporaries! For what that great bishop has said on this subject is read in the book which he wrote, *On the Sacraments,* or *On Philosophy.*[7]

This book begins thus: "There are certain precepts."

NOTE. Modern scholars who have manifested a significant interest in this great work, *On Christian Instruction,* have given close attention to the date of its composition and the early history of its text. A position frequently held is that Books 1 and 2 and Book 3 up to 25.36 were written about 396 or 397, and that the remainder of Book 3 and all of Book 4 were composed about 426 or 427. Such a position is supported by indications in the work itself and in other works of the author and by Possidius's *Vita Augustini.* In *On Christian Instruction* 3.33.46, mention is made of Augustine's *On the Spirit and the Letter (ca.* 412). Farther on, at 4.24.53, Augustine refers to his mission to Mauretania Caesariensis on order of Pope Zosimus (417-418) as having taken place eight or more years earlier (cf. also *Letters* 190 and 193 [418 A.D.] and Possidius, *Vita* 14). In *Against Faustus* 22.91 (*ca.* 400), there is a citation from *On Christian Instruction* 2.40.60; and lastly, we have the reference in the *Retractations (supra).* From this evidence, it is concluded that this important work was finally completed in 426 or 427, the date also assigned to the *Retractations.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 Cf. Gal. 4.24.

6 Cf. *On Christian Instruction* 2.28.43; also *On the City of God* 8.11. Cf. Ambrose, *Commentary on Psalm 118; On Noe and the Ark* 8.24.

7 Cf. Ambrose, *On the Sacraments (De sacramentis).* This work, formerly considered unauthentic, is now regarded as genuine by certain scholars whose opinion is generally accepted. Cf. B Altaner, *Patrology* 448; M. R. P. McGuire, "Ambrose, St.," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967) 1.373-375. Cf. also Augustine, *Against Julian* 2.5.14; 2.7.20, where this work is mentioned; also R. J. Deferrari's trans. of *De sacramentis,* FC 44, Introduction 265.

A recent treatment of the dating is that of Josef Martin, in *Traditio* 18 (1962) 69-87, whose edition of the work appears in *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* 32 (1962) 1-167. Another important, recent edition is that of W. M. Green, CSEL 80 (1963), in preparing which the editor has paid particular attention to a Leningrad codex which appears to be the oldest manuscript that we have of any work of Augustine's. The four works that it contains are all by Augustine and are the four that open Book 2 of the *Retractations*, the works appearing in the very order of Augustine's review of them. *On Christian Instruction* is represented by Bks. 1 and 2 only. In this presentation of the two books which alone were *complete ca.* 396, Green sees a copy, probably African and possibly made in Hippo itself, of a first edition of the work. Cf. W. M. Green, "A fourth century manuscript of St. Augustine?" *Revue Bénédictine* 69 (1959) 191-197; E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini antiquiores* 11 (1966) No. 1613.

St. Augustine came upon the unfinished manuscript of this work while he was engaged in writing the *Retractations* and decided to finish it. Though diversified in content, this important treatise is unified. It deals with the preparation required of an exegete, exegesis proper, and homiletics. At the beginning of Book 4, St. Augustine thus divides and summarizes it: "According to the plan adopted at the outset, I divided this work of mine, which is entitled *Christian Instruction*, into two parts. After the introduction in which I replied to those who would have censured it, I said: 'The entire treatment of the Scriptures is based upon two factors: the method of discovering what we are to understand and the method of teaching what has been understood. I shall discuss first the method of discovery and then the method of teaching.' Therefore, since the method of ascertaining the meaning has been discussed at length in the first three books, with the help of the Lord, I shall confine what I have to say about the method of teaching to one book, if possible, thus completing the entire work in four books" (trans. of John J. Gavigan, FC 2.4-5).

Book I, designed to prepare the exegete for the proper reading and interpretation of the Scriptures, contains a synthesis of the dogmatic and moral teaching of the Scriptures, whose study Augustine rightly considered essential to this preparation. In this book (1.5.5), there is the beginning of Augustine's distinction between enjoyment and use.

Book 2 deals with the knowledge, sacred and profane—languages and related subjects, natural sciences, history, *et cetera*—necessary for the proper reading and correct interpretation of Holy Scripture. Augustine recommends the text of Scripture to be used (the *"Itala"*)—in a passage (2.15.22) that

still defies satisfactory interpretation. He also advises the use of rhetoric and dialectic under certain conditions. He ends this book with a comparison of Sacred Scripture and profane writings.

Book 3 is a manual of hermeneutics, the principles or rules by which the exegete is to be guided in interpreting the Scriptures. The doctrine of the Church, Augustine affirms, is to be the guiding principle of the interpreter of the Sacred Books. The program of Christian culture of Augustine presented here was highly influential in succeeding epochs, especially in the Middle Ages. This book ends with an explanation of the seven rules contained in the Book of Rules (*Liber regularum, ca.* 382), the earliest extant treatise on hermeneutics, written by the Donatist lay theologian, Tyconius (died *ca.* 390). It is possible that Tyconius' work inspired St. Augustine to write on this subject.

Book 4 is often referred to as a manual of homiletics or preaching. In it, St. Augustine gives the methods to be used in explaining and teaching the meaning of the Bible to the people. Eloquence may be used to serve truth, he says (4.2.3). He makes use of Cicero (*De oratore* 1.32.145 and *De inventione* 1.5.7) when treating the art of rhetoric, and of the Sacred Scriptures for examples of eloquence and rules applicable to its use (4.7.20-21). As examples of the three styles of eloquence, he cites passages from the Epistles of St. Paul (4.20.39-44) and from Sts. Cyprian and Ambrose (4.21.45-50). He affirms that eloquence should be restrained. Above all, he states: "The commentator and teacher of the Sacred Scriptures" is under obligation "to teach right and correct wrong" (4.4.6). He counsels prayer before preaching (4.30.63) and ends this fourth and last book with an apology for its length (4.31.64).

This work is considered important, not only because of its content, but also because of its influence on important writers of later times, among whom are Cassiodorus, Hrabanus Maurus, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure. Augustine's recommendation of the use of clear passages of Holy Scripture to explain obscure ones is followed by him effectively in the present chapter of the *Retractations* and elsewhere in his numerous works.

In brief, it may be said that this work is a handbook for preachers of the word of God. In the first three books, there is a discussion of the value of the Sacred Scriptures and an explanation of the principles to be used in interpreting the Bible, particularly in divining its mystical and allegorical meaning and comparing this with its literal meaning. The fourth book gives advice to the preacher regarding the method to be used by him in giving sermons or other instructions on passages from

Holy Scripture. If, because of certain limitations, one cannot carry out the principles for preaching advocated by him, Augustine advises him to live in such a way that he will not only prepare a reward for himself, but will also furnish an example to others: "And let his beauty of life be, as it were, a powerful sermon" (4.29.61).

Chapter 31

TWO BOOKS AGAINST THE PARTY OF DONATUS

(Contra partem Donati libri duo)

There are two books of mine whose title is *Against the Party of Donatus.*

In the first of these books, I said: "I am displeased that schismatics are violently coerced to communion by the force of any secular power."[1] And truly, at this time, such coercion displeased me because I had not yet learned either how much evil their impunity would dare or to what extent the application of discipline could bring about their improvement.

This work begin thus: "Since the Donatists to us."

NOTE. Unfortunately, this anti-Donatist work, *Against the Party of Donatus,* is lost. It is known to us only through the *Retractations (supra),* where it is placed between the works *On Christian Instruction* and the *Confessions.* Since both these works were begun about 397, the probable date of the composition of this treatise is in the period 397-400.

In the *Retractations,* St. Augustine cites and comments on a passage of this anti-Donatist work, and, as usual, quotes the opening lines. We have to be content with this meager information.

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1 Cf. *Letter* 93.

Chapter 32

THIRTEEN BOOKS OF THE CONFESSIONS

(Confessionum libri tredecim)

(1) The thirteen books of my *Confessions* praise the just and good God for my evil and good acts, and lift up the understanding and affection of men to Him. At least, as far as I am concerned, they had this effect on me while I was writing them and they continue to have it when I am reading them. What others think about them is a matter for them to decide. Yet, I know that they have given and continue to give pleasure to many of my brethren. The first ten books were written about myself; the last three about Holy Scripture, from the words: "In the beginning God created heaven and earth"[1] as far as the Sabbath rest.[2]

(2) In the fourth book, after I confessed the misery of my soul at the time of the death of a friend, saying that in some manner our soul had been made one from two, I say: "And therefore perhaps I was afraid to die lest the one whom I had loved so much should wholly die."[3] This seems to me, as it were, a trifling pronouncement rather than a serious confession, although this absurdity may be moderated to some extent by the word *perhaps* which I added. And what I said in the thirteenth book: "The firmament" was made "between the higher spiritual waters and the lower corporeal waters,"[4] was said without sufficient deliberation. The subject, however, is exceedingly obscure.

This work begins as follows: "You are great, O Lord."

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1 Cf. Gen. 1.1.
2 Cf. Gen. 2.2.
3 Cf. *Confessions* 4.6.11.
4 *Ibid.* 13.32.47.

NOTE. About ten years before he began to compose this treatise, Augustine began to write the Cassiciacum dialogues (cf. *Retractations* 1.1-1.4). From this time until his death in 430, his literary output was immense. In addition to letters and sermons, he composed numerous treatises (cf. *Retractations* 2.93), among them an unusual work, the *Confessions.* It is probable that he did not complete this work before 398. All estimates of the date of its composition are based on a passage in the work itself, its position in the *Retractations,* on passages in two other treatises, namely, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* (cf. *Retractations* 2.50) and *On the Gift of Perseverance* (*De dono perseverantiae, ca.* 428 or 429).

From references in the *Confessions* (8.2.3) to St. Ambrose, and to Simplician, his successor as Bishop of Milan, it is inferred that Ambrose, who died April 4, 397, was living and that Simplician had not yet been elevated to the episcopacy. In the *Retractations,* Augustine places the *Confessions* after several treatises written in 396 or 397 and immediately before a treatise written *ca.* 397-400, *Against Faustus, the Manichaean.* In the second book of *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* (2.9.22), a work begun *ca.* 401 and completed *ca.* 415, Augustine refers to the thirteenth book of his *Confessions.* Later, in the treatise *On the Gift of Perserverance (De dono perserverantiae),* written in 428 or 429, he states (20.53) that he wrote the *Confessions* before the Pelagian heresy existed. From this evidence, it is concluded that Augustine completed the first eight or nine books of the *Confessions* in 397, and the entire work in 400 or 401 (cf. V. J. Bourke, Introduction to the trans. of the *Confessions* xv-xvi, FC 21; G. Bardy, *op. cit.* 577-578 n. 42).

Although this remarkable work contains an abundance of data on the author's life (Books 1-9), it is not an autobiography in our sense of the word, but a direct address of the soul of Augustine to God to praise Him for the graces received during its struggle against sin, weaknesses, and indecisions as it progressed from a state of sin to union with God. To praise God was, then, Augustine's primary purpose in writing the *Confessions* (cf. *Confessions* 1.1.1; *Retractations, supra*), but it was not his sole purpose. He also designed it to lift men's understanding and affection to God (cf. *Retractations, supra; Letter* 231 to Darius), an intention clearly restated at the beginning of the eleventh book: to stir up his own love and that of other men so that all may say, "Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised." Doubtless, too, the compelling force of a heart filled with love and gratitude impelled Augustine to relate the moving story of his soul's experiences (cf. V. J. Bourke, *Augustine's Quest of Wisdom* 147-148).

Augustine divides this work as follows: (1) Books 1-10; (2) Books 11-13. This logical division indicates the state of his soul before and during the composition of this treatise. Another grouping of these books, namely, Books 1-9, 10, 11-13, helps to clarify this complex yet unified writing.

Book 1 opens with a song of praise from Psalms 144.3 and 146.5, followed by the familiar passage that ends: "Our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." This song of praise continues throughout the next eight books. Book 10 is a psychological analysis of the soul of Augustine, a soul now transformed by faith and the grace of God, and a description of the stages whereby it reached the contemplation of God (cf. E. Portalié, translated by R. Bastian, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine* 40). Books 10 and 11 supply important original insights into the nature of memory and time, respectively. Books 11-13 are often referred to as a "commentary on Genesis." Here, Augustine tells how he found God in His creatures and in Holy Scripture. The Scriptural account of creation induces profound meditations on God, time, eternity, and the world. These reflections often reach sublime heights and inspire Augustine to praise and glorify God anew for his spiritual and intellectual gifts. "Thus," writes V. Bourke, "the *Confessions* are at once a religious faith, a meditation on the wondrous works of Providence, and a hymn of divine praise" (Introduction to the trans. of the *Confessions* ix, FC 21).

The *Confessions* is written in a form unique and novel in the Christian Latin literature of antiquity. It has been suggested that St. Cyprian's *To Donatus (Ad Donatum)* may have influenced Augustine to use this unusual literary genre (cf. B. Altaner, *Patrology* 499), a work in which the author described the wondrous effects of divine grace (cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology* II 346-347), but Augustine certainly did not use this as a model.

This treatise is considered one of the greatest books in the world's literature. The universality of its appeal for almost sixteen hundred years is evidenced by the incalculable number of its readers and its resultant influence.

Chapter 33

THIRTY-THREE BOOKS IN REPLY TO FAUSTUS, THE MANICHAEAN

(Contra Faustum Manicheum libri triginta tres)

(1) In reply to Faustus, the Manichaean, who, in blasphemous fashion, was attacking the Law and the Prophets, and their Lord, and the Incarnation of Christ, and who was also saying that the writings of the New Testament, by which one refutes them, are false, I wrote a lengthy work in which I give my replies to those words of his which I cite. There are thirty-three discussions; why should I not also call them books? Even though there are some short books among them, they are, nevertheless, books. In fact, hardly any one of my books is as long as that in which I defend the life of the patriarchs in reply to his accusations.[1]

(2) In the third book, then, when I was solving the question of how it was possible for Joseph to have two fathers,[2] I, indeed, said that "he was begotten by one and adopted by the other."[3] But I should have mentioned, too, the kind of adoption; for what I said sounds as if another living father had adopted him. The Law, however, also adopted the children of the deceased by ordering that "a brother marry the wife" of his childless, deceased brother and "raise up seed" by the same woman "for his deceased brother."[4] This explanation of this matter of the two fathers of one man is, indeed, made clearer. The brothers, moreover, were uterine; it happened, in their case, that the other brother, that is, Jacob, by whom Matthew says Joseph was begotten,[5] married

1 Cf. *Against Faustus, the Manichaean* 22; *Confessions* 5.3.3-6; 5.6.10-5.7.13.
2 Cf. Matt. 1.16; Luke 3.23; *Sermon* 51.
3 Cf. *Against Faustus, the Manichaean* 3.3.
4 Cf. Deut. 25.5; Matt. 22.24; Mark 12.19; Luke 20.28; *Questions on the Heptateuch* 5.46 (cf. *Retr.* 2.81).
5 Cf. Matt. 1.16.

the wife of his deceased brother who was called Heli; but he begot him for his own uterine brother whose son, Luke says,[6] was Joseph, certainly not begotten, but adopted according to the Law. This explanation was found in the writings of those who, after the Ascension of the Lord while the memory of it was recent, wrote on this subject. For, in truth, Africanus even mentioned the name of the very woman who gave birth to Jacob,[7] the father of Joseph, by a former husband, Mathan, who was the father of Jacob, the grandfather of Joseph, according to Matthew,[8] and by a second husband, Melchi gave birth to Heli of whom Joseph was the adopted son. I had not, indeed, read this when I replied to Faustus, but, yet, I could not doubt that it was possible for one man through adoption to have two fathers.

(3) In the twelfth and thirteenth books, I discussed the second son of Noe, who is called Cham, as though he had not been cursed by his father in his son,[9] as Holy Scripture shows,[10] but in himself.

In the fourteenth book, the sun and moon were spoken of as though they have perception and, hence, tolerate their vain adorers,[11] although the words in this passage can be understood as transferred from an animate to an inanimate being, in the manner of speaking which in Greek is called "metaphor," just as it is written of the sea, that "it murmurs in the womb of its mother wishing to go forth"[12] though, of course, it has no will.

6 Cf. Luke 3.23.

7 Cf. Sextus Julius Africanus *(ca.* 160-*ca.* 240), *Letter to Aristides* 3.9-15 (PG 10.52). This letter dealt with "the genealogies of Christ in Mark and Luke" [*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London 1958, reprint of 1957 edition)] 755. Cf. *Questions on the Heptateuch* 5.46 *(Retr.* 2.81).

8 Cf. Matt. 1.15-16.

9 Cf. *Against Faustus, the Manichaean* 12.23; 13.10.

10 Cf. Gen. 9.18-27; 5.31, 6.10, 7.13, 10.1; 1 Par. 1.4-8. Cf. E. Steinmueller and K. Sullivan, *Catholic Biblical Encyclopedia: Old Testament* (New York 1955) 221, 222.

11 Cf. *Against Faustus, the Manichaean* 14.12.

12 Cf. Job 38.8 according to the Septuagint.

In the twenty-ninth book, I say: "God forbid that there be anything disgraceful in the members of the saints, even in the generative organs. They are, indeed, called uncomely because they do not have the same appearance of beauty as the members that are exposed to view."[13] But in other works of ours written since then,[14] a more probable explanation has been given of the Apostle's reason for calling these members "uncomely," namely, because of "the law in the members fighting against the law of the mind."[15] This law is the result of sin, and not of the primal creation of our nature.

This work begins as follows: "There was a certain Faustus."[16]

NOTE. The date assigned to this work, *Against Faustus, the Manichaean, ca.* 397-400, is determined by references to: (1) a letter written by the author to St. Jerome, *Letter* 82, *ca.* 405, in which he refers Jerome to a passage in this work (19.17); (2) another work, *On the Harmony of the Evangelists* (1.4.8) *ca.* 400, where he refers to a second passage (22.52) which opposes Faustus concerning Leah and Rachel (cf. *Retractations* 2.42); (3) his *Retractations,* where the present work is placed between the *Confessions* (completed *ca.* 400-401) and the work directed against Felix, *Against Felix, the Manichaean,* written *ca.* 404.

The identity of Faustus is established beyond doubt by the opening words of this disputation (cf. *Against Faustus* 1.1), where Augustine states that Faustus is an African in race, a citizen of Milevis, a Manichaean, and the man of whom he gives an account in his *Confessions* (5.3.3; 5.6.10-5.7.13).

In the present lengthy, forceful polemic, Augustine opposes Faustus' attack on the Old and New Testaments, that is, on the Law and the Prophets, the Lord, the Incarnation of Christ, and the life of the Patriarchs (cf. *Retractations, supra*). The format of this treatise compels the reader's attention: Augustine presents his arguments and those of his opponent in dialogue form as though Faustus and he were engaged in a debate. First, he cites the arguments of Faustus—thus preserving the latter's work almost entirely—and then he refutes them one by one.

This treatise in Biblical criticism opposes the attacks of the Manichaeans on the Bible, refutes and argues against Manichaean errors, and defends Judaism and Christianity.

13 Cf. *Against Faustus, the Manichaean* 29.4.
14 Cf. *On the City of God* 22.19.
15 Cf. Rom. 7.23; 1 Cor. 12.23.
16 Cf. *Confessions* 5.6.10-5.7.13.

Chapter 34

TWO BOOKS AGAINST FELIX, THE MANICHAEAN

(Contra Felicem Manicheum libri duo)

In a church in the presence of the people, I argued for two days against a certain Manichaean, Felix by name. In fact, he had come to Hippo to sow this very error; for he was one of their preachers and, although without a liberal education, yet, more adroit than Fortunatus. The proceedings are an ecclesiastical record, but they are numbered among my books. They comprise, then, two books. In the second of these, there is a discussion on free choice of the will to do evil or good. But we were not compelled by necessity to argue more precisely about grace by which they about whom it was written: "If the Son makes you free, then you will be free indeed"[1] are truly made free, since he, with whom we were holding the discussion, was the kind of man he was. This work begins as follows: "On the seventh of December in the sixth consulship of Honorius Augustus."

NOTE. During his priesthood and episcopacy, Augustine fought against the Manichaean heresy in sermons, debates, and writings. His eminent success in a verbal encounter with the Manichaean leader, Fortunatus (392), has been treated above (1.15). Years later, during his episcopate, he invited to a public debate Felix, a Manichaean teacher and one of the number of their elect who had come to Hippo to propagate the doctrines of the sect he was championing. Despite his fear of the crowd, warranted perhaps because of the opposition of the people of Hippo to his teachings (cf. *Against Felix, the Manichaean* 1.12), Felix accepted the challenge. Augustine and he presented their opposing arguments in a church at Hippo for two days, beginning December 7, 404, according, that is, to the prefatory words of the official record of this disputation which are repeated in the *Retracta-*

1 Cf. John 8.36.

tions (supra): "Honorio Augusto sextum consule septimo idus decembris." This date, however, is controversial (cf. Paul Monceaux, in *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* [1908] 51-53, where the author assigns this work to 398 by changing *sextum* to *quartum;* cf. also V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 131 n. 36; H. Pope, *St. Augustine of Hippo* 339; G. Bardy, *Les révisions* 578-579).

The work, *Against Felix, the Manichaean,* is Augustine's account of the proceedings of this public debate, in which he was as highly successful in confuting Felix as he had been in confounding Fortunatus years before. Felix acknowledged defeat by being a consignatory of the ecclesiastical records that testify to his agreement to declare Manichaeus *anathema* and thus virtually to renounce the latter's false teachings (cf. PL 42.550-552; CSEL 25.2.851-852).

If this Felix and the one mentioned in Possidius, *Vita* 16, are identical—an undetermined point—then Felix was converted to the Catholic faith. It is generally thought, however, that the Felix mentioned as the successor of Fortunatus in a letter of Augustine (*Letter* 79, 404 A.D.) is the person whom Augustine opposed in this disputation.

Chapter 35

ONE BOOK ON THE NATURE OF THE GOOD

(De natura boni liber unus)

The book, *On the Nature of the Good,* is against the Manichaeans. In it, I show: that God is unchangeable nature and the highest good and that all other natures, either spiritual or corporeal, are from Him; and that all natures, insofar as they are natures, are good; and what and whence evil is; and how much evil the Manichaeans put in the nature of good and how much good in the nature of evil, natures that their error has fabricated.[1]

1 Cf. *On Heresies* 46.

This book begins as follows: "The highest good than which there can be no higher is God."

NOTE. The date assigned to the work, *On the Nature of the Good,* varies. Nothing is said by Augustine in his *Retractations* that helps to determine it. It is contingent on the acceptance or rejection of 404 as the year of the composition of *Against Felix, the Manichaean,* reexamined by the author in the preceding chapter of the *Retractations* (cf. NOTE thereon for the controversy concerning this date). If the year 404 is accepted, the conclusion is that this work was probably written in 405.

Augustine not only omits any suggestion about the date of this work in his *Retractations,* but he also departs from another rather common practice, that of stating the purpose of the work in question. He does, however, give a summation of its contents.

This treatise recapitulates in part the arguments advanced by Augustine in earlier works against the Manichaean heresy and certain heretics of this sect: God is immutable nature and the highest good; He is the source of all natures, material and immaterial; in their essence, all natures are good since they derive from Him; evil is a deficiency (privation); it is not possible to conceive a principle of things essentially evil; sin is a voluntary act. Augustine bases his proofs on Scripture. He also endeavors to show the inconsistency of the Manichaean principles of good and evil. Furthermore, by quoting at length passages from both the *Thesaurus* and the *Foundation Letter* of Mani, he ably and convincingly supports the contention that certain practices of the Manichaeans are gross (cf. chaps. 42, 44, 45, 46, 47). This polemic ends (48) in a moving prayer for success in refuting the error of Manichaeism and for the conversion of its adherents.

Chapter 36

ONE BOOK AGAINST SECUNDINUS, THE MANICHAEAN

(Contra Secundinum Manicheum liber unus)

A certain Secundinus,[1] not one of those whom the Manichaeans call elect, but one of their auditors,[2] a man whom I did not even know by sight, wrote to me as a friend, respectfully reproaching me on the ground that I was attacking that heresy in writing, advising me not to do this, and exhorting me rather to be an adherent of it by defending it and by censuring the Catholic faith. I answered him; but because at the head of this work I did not state who was writing to whom, it is not to be considered among my letters, but among my books. At the beginning of it, his letter is also written. Moreover, the title of this volume of mine is *Against Secundinus, the Manichaean.* In my opinion, this is preferable to all I have been able to write against that plague.

This book begins as follows: "The good will toward me which is apparent in your letter."

NOTE. The letter-treatise, *Against Secundinus, the Manichaean,* composed about 405/406, is Augustine's reply to a letter of a Manichaean auditor, Secundinus, unknown, Augustine says, to him by sight (cf. *Retractations, supra*), and known to us only as the author of this letter which Augustine put at the head of his reply to it—the present work—(PL 42.571-578; CSEL 25.2.893-901) and through Augustine's *On Heresies* (46) and *Confessions* (7.10.11). For reasons given by him in the *Retractations (supra),*

1 Secundinus paid tribute to Augustine in a letter *(Letter to Augustine* 3, PL 42.574; CSEL 25.2 p. 895). "No one has ever disputed his gifts," writes Van der Meer. "His opponent, Secundinus the Manichee, declares in one of his letters that he had never been able 'to discern a Christian in him, but on all occasions a born orator, a veritable god of eloquence'" *(Augustine the Bishop* 412).

2 Cf. *Confessions* 3.10.18, with V. J. Bourke's note, FC 21.67 n. 54.

Augustine numbered this work among his "books" rather than among his letters.

The letter of Secundinus is both friendly and tactful. In it, he pays tribute to the oratory of Augustine, gently and respectfully reproaches him for using his pen against the Manichaean party, and earnestly urges him to again become an adherent of this sect by defending it and condemning the Catholic faith.

Augustine preferred his definitive and firm response to these admonitions and urgings of Secundinus, the present anti-Manichaean work, to his other writings against the Manichaean "plague" *(Retractations, supra).* On this account alone it merits special recognition and study.

Chapter 37

ONE BOOK AGAINST HILARY

(Contra Hilarum liber unus)

Meanwhile, a certain Hilary, a Catholic layman of tribunitial rank, incited to anger, for some reason or other, against the ministers of God, as often happens, in abusive, censorious language, wherever it was possible, was violently attacking the custom which, at the time, had been introduced in Carthage, of singing hymns from the Book of Psalms[1] either before the oblation or when what had been offered was being distributed to the people;[2] he insisted that this should not be done. At the urging of my brethren, I answered him; the book is called *Against Hilary.*

This book begins as follows: "Those who mention the Old Testament."

1 Cf. *Confessions* 9.7.15.

2 Cf. A. C. Outler's translation of the *Confessions* (LCC 7.187) note 22, on *Confessions* 9.7.15: "This was apparently the first introduction into the West of antiphonal chanting, which was already widespread in the East. Ambrose brought it in; Gregory brought it to perfection."

NOTE. A certain Hilary, a Catholic layman of tribunitial rank, for reasons unknown to Augustine, became wrathful toward God's ministers, and began to protest abusively against the singing at the altar of hymns from the Book of Psalms, a practice which had been recently introduced into Carthage (cf. *Retractations, supra; Confessions* 9.7.15). Augustine's reply to this censure of hymn-singing during the distribution of the Species or at the Offertory, which he entitled *Against Hilary*, is not extant. Its possession would increase our knowledge of one of the liturgical practices of this time, a topic of vital interest during these days of the revitalizing of the study of liturgical practices when similar differences of opinion cause arguments for and against hymn singing during the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Its loss is regrettable, too, because it deprives us of an interesting chapter in the history of the liturgy of the early Christian Church of Africa.

Chapter 38

TWO BOOKS, QUESTIONS ON THE GOSPELS

(Quaestiones evangeliorum, libri duo)

There are certain explanations of some passages from the Gospel according to Matthew and others, similarly, of that according to Luke; the former have been collected into one book, the latter into another. The title of this work is *Questions on the Gospels*. But why only the passages from the Evangelists mentioned above which have been included in my books have been explained and what they are, is indicated sufficiently in my prologue. There, these same questions are assembled and numbered in such a way that anyone, by following the numbers, may find what he wishes to read.

In the first book, then, where the following is stated: "The Lord spoke of His passion to His two disciples by them-

selves,"[1] a mistake in my exemplar deceived me: in reality *twelve* not *two* is written.[2]

In the second book,[3] I wanted to explain how Joseph, whose spouse was called the Virgin Mary, could have two fathers: the explanation that a brother married the wife of his deceased brother to raise up seed for him according to the Law,[4] I said, "is weak because the Law ordered that the infant at birth receive the name of the deceased." This is not true; for the Law prescribed that the name of the deceased, as is said, serve the following purpose, namely, that he [the infant] be declared his son,[5] not that he be called by the same name.

This work begins as follows: "This work was not so written."

NOTE. This work in two books, *Questions on the Gospels,* is a collection of answers made over a period of time by the author to questions on passages from St. Matthew and St. Luke. The first book contains explanations of selections from the Gospel of St. Matthew, the second from that of St. Luke. The assembling of these replies is generally thought to have been begun about 399 or 400. Some, however, basing their conclusion solely on the position of this work in the *Retractations,* assume that the probable date of the final drawing up of this work and its subsequent publication may have been as late as 405/406.

Among other pieces of information given us by Augustine in his *Retractations* concerning this work, none is more interesting than his remark that the prologue contains his reason for confining the explanation of passages from Holy Scripture to those dealing with selections from St. Matthew and St. Luke. In this review, he also corrects an error due to the use of an incorrect reading in the version of Scripture used by him, and he comments anew on the question of the "two fathers" of St. Joseph (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

This work, a collection of answers to questions dealing with Scripture, is not "strictly exegetical" as the title suggests, but rather predominantly moral and mystical in tone (cf. Cayré, *op. cit.* 655; Portalié *op. cit.* 62; PL 35.1322-1364).

1 Cf. *Questions on the Gospels* 1.27.
2 Cf. Matt. 20.17; Luke 18.31; Mark 10.32.
3 Cf. *Questions on the Gospels* 2.5.
4 Cf. Deut. 25.5; Matt. 22.24; Mark 12.19; Luke 20.28.
5 Cf. *Retr.* 2.33.2; *Questions on the Heptateuch* 5.46; *Discourses on the Psalms* 44.23.

Chapter 39

ONE BOOK, NOTES ON JOB

(Adnotationes in Iob, liber unus)

Whether the book whose title is *Notes on Job* is to be considered mine or rather the work of those who, according to their capacity or desire, collected into a single book the notes which were written on the margins of the manuscript, I could not easily say. For they have an appeal for the very few who understand them, who, nevertheless, of necessity are displeased through not understanding many things; for, in many places, the very words which are used in explanation have not been written in such a way that what is being explained is made clear. Secondly, so great an obscurity is caused by the brevity of the explanations that the reader can scarcely tolerate this obscurity, for he is compelled to pass over a great many things which are not comprehensible. Finally, I also discovered that this work is defective in our copies with the result that I could not emend it,[1] and would not want it said that it was edited by me if I did not know that some of my brethren had it; for this reason I could not disregard their desire.

This book begins as follows: "And great were His works upon the earth."

NOTE. Augustine's critical examination of the work, *Notes on Job,* in his *Retractations (supra)* is unusual. He not only states that he finds it difficult to decide whether to ascribe this work to himself or to the persons who had collected from a manuscript the marginal notes of which it is composed, but he also gives several reasons for this indecision: the brevity and resultant obscurity of these assembled notes is such that they can be enjoyed only by the small minority of readers who understand them; that the lack of clarity of many passages makes

1 Cf. *Retr.* 1.26.

them incomprehensible and intolerable to this minority; that he was unable to emend the defective copy in his possession; and that the work was edited by his brethren in this uncorrected form because he could not refuse them.

Augustine's hesitancy to include this work among his literary productions in the faulty form for which others were responsible arouses in the reader of the *Retractations* a sympathetic understanding. At this period of his greatest intellectual development, it must have been difficult for him to allow an uncritical edition of a work bearing his name to be listed among his literary productions, particularly, because time and circumstances prevented him from revising it. He gives a like reason for holding back his great work *On the Trinity* (cf. *Retractations* 2.41 NOTE).

It is not possible to determine with exactitude the time of the composition of these marginal *Notes on Job.* From the position of the work in the *Retractations,* where it immediately follows *Questions on the Gospels,* it is generally concluded that it was edited about 399.

Chapter 40

ONE BOOK ON CATECHIZING THE UNINSTRUCTED

(De catechizandis rudibus liber unus)

There is also one book on catechizing the uninstructed, with this also as its title. In this book where I said: "The angel who with the other spirits, his satellites, forsook obedience to God through pride and became a devil, did not injure God in any way, but himself, for God knows how to order *souls* that forsake Him,"[1] it would have been more fitting to say: "*spirits* that forsake Him," since the discussion was about angels.

This book begins thus: "You have asked me, brother Deogratias."

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1 *On Catechizing the Uninstructed* 18.30.

NOTE. The theoretical and practical treatise, *On Catechizing the Uninstructed,* is Augustine's response to the request of one of his friends, Deogratias, a deacon of the Church in Carthage, for written counsel that would be useful to him in instructing candidates for the catechumenate (cf. *ibid.* 1.1-1.2; *Retractations supra).* That the addressee of this treatise is the priest to whom, at a later time (*ca.* 409), Augustine wrote a letter (*Letter* 102) whose title is "One Book in Explanation of Six Questions Raised by the Pagans" (cf. FC 18.148 n. 1) can be conjectured only.

This treatise has two main parts. The first of these (chapters 1-15) is devoted to the theory of the art of catechizing; the second (chapters 16-27) to a practical application of this theory. In the first part, Augustine, after a brief introduction (chapters 1-2), gives expert advice to the catechist about the subject matter and method of a catechetical instruction and the qualities of a good instructor. He counsels him to inquire into the motives of the candidates in desiring to become Christians, and to adapt his instruction to the different types of his hearers: the well-educated (those trained in the liberal arts), the moderately educated (those from ordinary schools of grammar and rhetoric), and the uneducated. In the last five chapters of this portion of the treatise (chapters 11-15), considered by some the most valuable section from a practical point of view, Augustine advises the catechist to be cheerful in manner and to avoid boring or fatiguing his listeners, gives six causes of fatigue, suggests remedies for them, and concludes with advice about the adaptation of the style of the instruction to the audience.

The second or practical part of this work (chapters 16-27) is composed of two examples of a complete catechesis or catechetical instruction. The first is long (16.24-26.50); the second, short (26.51-27.55). Both contain the essential parts of a catechesis, namely, the narration, which is directed to the understanding, and the exhortation, directed to the will, and both illustrate the principles laid down by the author in the first or theoretical part of the treatise. Included are advice on the attitudes, the spirit, and the other qualities a catechist should possess, as well as words of encouragement for the one engaged in the arduous work of instilling the truths of the Christian religion into beginners or inquirers.

From the patristic period, two remarkable catechetical works are preserved: the *Catecheses* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem (b. about 313, probably at Jerusalem, d. about 386) and the present treatise of St. Augustine, *On Catechizing the Uninstructed.*

St. Cyril's *Catecheses,* the famous twenty-four catechetical lectures, rescriptions of notes taken by a member of the congre-

gation, were delivered, for the most part, in the Church of the Sepulchre built by Constantine. They consist of two groups: The first of these is composed of the *Procatechesis* or introductory lecture, and eighteen discourses addressed during Lent to the candidates for baptism (the *photidzomenoi*); the second group is made up of five lectures or catechetical instructions called the "mystagogical catecheses," addressed after Easter to the newly-baptized, the *neophotistoi* or neophytes (cf. Altaner, *op. cit.* 361; Cayré, *op. cit.* 367-368).

The second of these catechetical works of the patristic period, the present treatise, is the only extant ancient Christian writing that contains both the theory of the act of catechizing and examples of catecheses based on this theory. As St. Augustine says (1.2), it was written, not only because he could not refuse the request of a friend, a circumstance that induced him to write other works, but also out of reverence and love for the Church. A number of features that make it distinctive have been mentioned above. To these only a few of several others can be added here.

This work contains pedagogical principles and apt examples of them that can be studied with profit by teachers of all ages and in every area of instruction. Furthermore, the author's treatment of the Old Testament narrative, his inclusion of the articles of the Creed without specifically designating them, his incidental exhortations, his words of encouragement for the catechist, and his emphasis on the catechist's presenting his discourse in a spirit of cheerfulness, as well as the necessity for his keeping in mind the hearer's interests and a specific objective, increase the value of this manual for catechists.

Noteworthy, too, are Augustine's discussion (26.50) of the spiritual meaning of *salt* according to Holy Scripture, his view of "Christ's body" (cf. *Letter* 98; *Discourses on the Psalms* 3.1), his idea of the two cities, a view he had entertained as early as 390 and which, in all probability, he had borrowed from the Donatist Tyconius (cf. *Retractations* 2.69), who, according to Christopher Dawson, also influenced him in his interpretation of Scripture, in his theology, and in his attitude toward history (cf. C. Dawson, "St. Augustine and His Age: The City of God," *A Monument to St. Augustine* 58-60; *On Catechizing the Uninstructed* 19.31, 21.37; *On the City of God* 14.1, 14.28, 15.1, 15.2).

Chapter 41

FIFTEEN BOOKS ON THE TRINITY

(De Trinitate libri quindecim)

(1) Over a period of several years, I wrote fifteen books, *On the Trinity*, which is God. But before I had completed twelve of them and was withholding them longer than they who were exceedingly desirous of having them could endure, they were taken from me with fewer emendations than they ought to or would have had at the time when I had intended to publish them. After I found this out, since, indeed, other copies of them remained in my possession, I made the decision not to publish them at this time, but to keep them as they were, so as to say, in some other work of mine, what had happened to me in their regard. At the insistence of my brethren, however—because I did not have the strength to resist them—I emended the books to the extent that I thought they ought to be emended and I completed and published them. To them at the beginning, I added a letter that I had written to venerable Aurelius, Bishop of the Church at Carthage,[1] and, in this prologue, so to speak, I explained both what had happened and what I had intended to do according to my plan, and what I, compelled by love for my brethren, had done.

(2) In the eleventh of these books, when I was discussing the visible body, I said: "To love this, therefore, is to be estranged [from God]."[2] This was said relative to that love with which something is so loved that in the enjoyment of it the one who loves this considers himself happy; for it is not estrangement to love corporeal beauty unto the praise of the

1 *Letter* 174 (*ca.* 416). Cf. *Letter* 169 (*ca.* 415), where Augustine speaks of the difficulty involved in interpreting *On the Trinity*.
2 Cf. *On the Trinity* 11.5.9.

Creator, so that everyone who enjoys the Creator himself is truly happy.

Likewise, in the same book where I said: "Neither do I recall a four-footed bird because I have not seen one; but yet, with the greatest of ease, I visualize a mental image of one by adding to some winged form such as I have seen, two other feet such as I have likewise seen."[3] When saying this, I could not recall the winged quadrupeds which the Law mentions.[4] Indeed, the Law does not number among feet the two hind legs on which locusts hop which it calls clean. It, then, distinguishes them from unclean winged creatures that do not hop on these legs, such as beetles. In truth, in the Law, all creatures of this kind are called winged quadrupeds.

(3) I am not satisfied with the explanation, so to speak, in the twelfth book[5] of the words of the Apostle where he says: "Every sin that a man commits is outside the body."[6] And I do not think that what he said: "But he who commits fornication sins against his own body,"[7] is to be interpreted as though he who does anything to obtain the pleasant sensations which are perceived through the body in order to place in them the end of his own good commits this sin. For this includes far more sins than the fornication which is committed through illicit concubinage,[8] about which it is apparent the Apostle spoke when he said this.

This work, exclusive of the latter which was added at a later time to its beginning, commences as follows: "He who is going to read the things we have discussed concerning the Trinity."

NOTE. The work *On the Trinity* is the principal, the most profound, and the longest dogmatic work of Augustine. Its

3 *Ibid.* 11.10.17.
4 Cf. Lev. 11.20.
5 Cf. *On the Trinity* 12.10.15.
6 Cf. 1 Cor. 6.18.
7 *Ibid.*
8 Cf. *Retr.* 1.18.6; *Sermon* 162.

approximate dates are determined by its position in the *Retractations,* where it immediately precedes *On the Harmony of the Evangelists* (cf. *Retractations* 2.42), and from certain letters of Augustine which indicate that it had not been edited at the time they were composed: *Letter* 120 to Consentius (410), *Letter* 143 to Marcellinus (*ca.* 412), and *Letters* 162 and 169 to Evodius (*ca.* 414 and the end of 415). On the other hand, we know that it was completed by 416, the year Augustine sent a letter, *Letter* 174, to Bishop Aurelius, primate of Africa, in which he gives a history of this work and states that he is sending the bishop a copy of it. Its composition, then, in all probability, falls in the years 400-416.

As we see, about sixteen years elapsed between the beginning and completion of this significant work. This was largely due, not only to Augustine's reluctance to release it before he could revise it, but also to the importance of the subject matter and the difficulty entailed in composing it. Furthermore, the demands made on the author's time by his episcopal duties and by other writings (cf. *Letter* 169; *On the Trinity* 1.3.5, 1.3.6) help to explain the length of time its writing spanned. But before the twelfth book was completed, a copy of the manuscript was taken from him by stealth and circulated without his knowledge or consent before he had time to carry out his plan to publish it in its entirety after a careful revision (*Retractations, supra;* cf. *Letter* 174). He reversed this decision on the insistence of a number of his brethren and at the bidding of Bishop Aurelius, and he released it without revising it to his complete satisfaction *(ibid.).* His treatment of this momentous work in his *Retractations,* confined to minor corrections, seems to indicate that he was satisfied with the difficult dogmatic exposition contained in it.

Augustine wished his letter to Bishop Aurelius to be considered a preface to this work (cf. *Letter* 174; *Retractations, supra).* The treatise proper consists of two parts: Books 1-7 and Books 8-15. In the first part, Augustine formulates the doctrine of the Trinity according to the testimony of the Scriptures, refutes philosophical objections, and reasserts and reaffirms the doctrine of the unity and equality of the Triune God. In one passage, he gives a précis of it: "All Catholic interpreters of the divine books, both the Old and the New Testaments, whom I have been able to read, who wrote before me about the Trinity, which is God, had this purpose in view: to teach, in accordance with the Scriptures, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit constitute a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality . . ." (*On the Trinity* 1.4.7, trans. by S. McKenna, FC 45.10). In the second, more original part (Books 8-15), Augustine endeavors

to help Christians understand the central dogma of Christian theology, the Trinity, by making use of images and analogies, "trinities" found in human nature, especially that of the "trinity" of the memory, understanding, and will of the human soul which he compares to the three divine Persons, thus making man an "image" of the Triune God (cf. *On the Trinity* 10.12.19; 14.8.11; 9.2.2; 15.6.10). This so-called psychological theory of the Trinity, originated by Augustine, marked an entirely new approach to the study of this dogma.

In the fifteenth book (3.4f), we find a synopsis of the entire treatise. This work "essentially completes the Patristic speculation on the Trinity" (B. Altaner, *op. cit.* 506) and marks a transition from Greek to Latin theology. In the main, its principles were followed, with few exceptions, by Western theologians. The scholastics of the medieval period elaborated on it and gave it greater precision. "This work," Vernon Bourke states, "shows that St. Augustine is now a master of Christian doctrine, and it is another evidence of the deepening of his religious wisdom during the decade 410-420" (*op. cit.* 190. Cf. *ibid.* 203-223 for an excellent analysis of this treatise; also S. McKenna, Introduction to the trans. of this work [FC 45] vii-xvi). Like St. Hilary of Poitiers in his own *De Trinitate,* St. Augustine ends his work on this profound doctrine with a prayer.

Chapter 42

FOUR BOOKS ON THE HARMONY OF THE EVANGELISTS

(De consensu evangelistarum libri quattuor)

During the years in which I was gradually composing the books, *On the Trinity,* by unceasing labor, I also wrote others, temporarily interposing the latter into periods meant for the former. Among these, there are four books, *On the Harmony of the Evangelists,* composed because of those who falsely accuse the Evangelists of lacking agreement. The first of these books was written against those who honor or pretend to honor Christ as especially wise and refuse to believe in

the Gospels precisely on the ground that they were written, not by Him, but by His disciples, who, in their opinion, erroneously attributed to Him that divinity by reason of which He is believed to be God.

In this book, my statement that "the race of the Hebrews began from Abraham"[1] is indeed credible on the assumption that they were called *Hebrei* as being *Abrahei;* but they are more correctly thought to have been named after him who was called *Heber,* that is, *Heberei.*[2] I have discussed this in detail in the sixteenth book of *On the City of God.*[3]

In the second book, when I was discussing the two fathers of Joseph, I said that he was begotten by one, adopted by the other,[4] but I should have said instead, adopted *for* the other. For we should believe rather that, according to the Law,[5] he was adopted for the deceased, since the one who begat him had married his mother, the wife of his deceased brother.[6]

Likewise, where I said: "But Luke traces the origin back to the same David through Nathan, by which prophet God took away his sin,"[7] I should have said, "by a Prophet of this name," so that it would not be thought that he was the same man, since he was a different person, although he too had this name.[8]

This book begins as follows: "Among all the divine authorities."

NOTE. The date generally assigned to the work, *On the Harmony of the Evangelists,* is about 400. Evidence to support this is taken from the *Retractations,* the work itself, and other

1 Cf. *On the Harmony of the Evangelists* 1.14.21.
2 Cf. *Questions on the Heptateuch* 1.24 (*Retr.* 2.81); Num. 26.45: "The sons of Brei: Heber, of whom is the family of the Heberites: and Melchiel, of whom is the family of Melchielites."
3 Cf. *On the City of God* 16.11.
4 Cf. *On the Harmony of the Evangelists* 2.3.5.
5 Cf. Deut. 25.5; Matt. 22.24; Mark 12.19; Luke 20.28.
6 Cf. *Retr.* 2.33.2; 2.38.3.
7 *On the Harmony of the Evangelists* 2.4.12. Cf. Luke 3.31.
8 Cf. *Retr.* 1.25, ques. 61.

works of Augustine. In the *Retractations (supra)*, Augustine states that he interrupted his work *On the Trinity* (*ca.* 400-416) to compose this treatise and that he wrote it and other works while dictating the former. Other determinants of this date center on the imperial edict which ordered the destruction of the temples and idols of the pagans. From Constantine to Valentinian I, Christianity was strongly supported by the Roman emperors with the exception of Julian. Under Gratian and Theodosius, the prohibition of paganism was put into effect and, under Honorius (reigned 395-423), the laws against the old religion increased. A law, passed in the early part of the reign of Honorius, is of concern to us here (cf. *Theodosian Code* 16.10.19). It was addressed to the praetorian prefect of Italy and was an edict ordering the demolition of pagan temples, altars, and idols. From a passage in one of Augustine's sermons (*Sermon* 62.18), we know that this law had not yet been applied to Africa. In the record of this discourse, the author states that though Christians are enemies of the idols of the pagans, they are more concerned with destroying the idols in the pagan hearts. From a passage in the treatise itself (*On the Harmony of the Evangelists* 1.19.27), we come to a like conclusion about this law in Africa. The earliest reference in the works of Augustine to its execution in that country is found in *On the City of God* (18.54): "Now in the following year, during the consulate of Mallius Theodorus [399] . . . in the illustrious city of Carthage . . . on March 31, Gaudentius and Jovius, officers of the Emperor Honorius, destroyed the temples of false gods and smashed their statues." From this evidence, it seems correct to conclude that this treatise was begun about 400, the year Augustine began to write *On the Trinity* (cf. *Retractations* 2.41).

In the first book of the present work (1.7.10), Augustine gives his reason for composing it: ". . . we have undertaken this work to point out the errors and presumption of those who think that they present sufficiently clear charges against the four books of the Gospel which, individually, the four Evangelists have written and, in order that this be effected, we must prove in what respect also the four writers are not opposed to one another, for, in their vanity, they [the accusers] are accustomed to present this as an objection, one indicative of victory, so to speak, that the Evangelists are not in agreement with one another."

In this work, then, Augustine sought to defend the four Gospels against the charge that they are contradictory. In the first book, he defends the divinity of Christ and the authority of the Gospels and refutes the charge that the teaching of the Evangelists is not in accord with that of Christ. In the second

and third books, he examines the Gospel of St. Matthew with great care and compares and endeavors to reconcile it with that of the other three Evangelists. In the fourth book, he examines and compares specific passages in Mark, Luke, and John that are not paralleled in Matthew. He concludes the fourth book by pointing out the distinction between St. John's Gospel and that of his fellow Evangelists.

Although Augustine was not as qualified as St. Jerome would have been to undertake this difficult work, for his knowledge of Greek was limited and he did not know Hebrew and, for this reason, at times used less accurate versions of the Scriptures, yet this work is deserving of special mention because it is a commendable attempt to reconcile the apparent contradictions found in the four Gospels. Its defects by no means destroy the value of its originality and the ingeniousness and painstaking care with which Augustine undertook to reconcile the seeming inconsistencies of the Gospel narratives. Consideration should also be given to the fact that this work is the composition of an author who, in many other writings, proved that he was thoroughly versed in the Scriptures and that he applied this knowledge strikingly and skillfully to their subject matter. A further recommendation of this work can be made on the ground that, in it, Augustine develops the interpretation of the Evangelists' accounts on some of the excellent principles he advocated in his work, *On Christian Instruction* (cf. *Retractations* 2.30). Admittedly, his observations in some places are subtle rather than solid. In our days, the critical apparatus available to exegetes is so far superior to that to which St. Augustine had access, and the development of exegesis has progressed so much farther, that its superiority is understandable. To throw the present treatise into an unfavorable light by comparison with it, would be to ignore the part Augustine played in the development of Scriptural exegesis.

Chapter 43

THREE BOOKS IN ANSWER TO A LETTER OF PARMENIAN

(Contra epistulam Parmeniani libri tres)

In certain books, *In Answer to a Letter of Parmenian*,[1] bishop of the Donatists at Carthage and the successor of Donatus, an important question is considered and resolved: whether the evil by participation contaminate the good in the unity of the same sacraments, and [if not] why they do not contaminate them. This whole matter is being discussed in the interest of the Church spread over the entire world. In calumniating it, [these evil persons] have caused a schism.

In the third of these books, in discussing how to interpret the Apostle's words: "Expel the wicked man from your midst,"[2] I said "each one should expel *the evil* from himself."[3] This passage should not be interpreted as stated, but rather in the following way: that the evil man be separated from good men (which is done through ecclesiastical discipline), as the Greek text clearly indicates, for it is written without ambiguity, so that *the evil man*, not *this evil*, is understood, even though, in fact, I answered Parmenian according to the aforesaid meaning.

This work begins as follows: "Many things, indeed, on other occasions, against the Donatists."

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1 Cf. *Contra Parmenianum Donatistam* by Optatus of Milevis in Numidia. This work, intended by its author to further a peaceful solution to the controversy, contains a history of the Donatist schism. The first edition of this work, which consisted of six books, was published in 365. The second edition, published after 385, contained seven books; cf. B. Altaner, *Patrology* 435.

2 Cf. 1 Cor. 5.13.

3 Cf. *In Answer to a Letter of Parmenian* 3.1.12.

NOTE. The treatise entitled *Against a Letter of Parmenian,* the fourth anti-Donatist work of Augustine reviewed by him in his *Retractations* (cf. *Retractations* 1.19; 1.20; 2.31; 2.43), was composed about 400. It is a refutation of a letter written by Parmenian to a fellow Donatist, Tyconius, a lay exegete, in forceful protest against the latter's view that the Church is universal. As we mentioned above, at the end of the third book of his work, *On Christian Instruction* (cf. *Retractations* 2.30), Augustine incorporates the principles contained in Tyconius' *Liber regularum.*

Parmenian succeeded Donatus as Donatist Bishop of Carthage and ruled over that see from 355-*ca.* 390/391. Under his leadership, Donatism, which had been proscribed in Africa for years until the reign of Julian (361-363), took on new life. Eventually, Parmenian became so capable and famous a Donatist that his adherents were sometimes referred to as Parmenianists (cf. the present treatise 1.4.9; *On Heresies* 41, where Augustine mentions this). As a result, Donatism was a decided threat to the African Church when Augustine became Bishop of Hippo (*ca.* 395), despite the vigorous efforts of its opponents. Among these, in addition to Augustine, was St. Optatus of Milevis in Numidia, who in *ca.* 365/366 published a work in six books, *Contra Parmenianum,* also known as *De schismate Donatistarum,* designed to refute a work written by Parmenian early in his episcopacy. Later, Optatus added a seventh book to this treatise and published the enlarged edition *ca.* 385.

In this reply to Parmenian, Augustine's treatment of the Church and the Sacraments, the pivotal points of the controversy between Donatists and Catholics, is considered a development of the doctrine of Optatus. Augustine defends the holiness and universality of the Church and discusses and solves a "new" question: whether by participation in unity of the sacraments the evil contaminate the good, and if not, why not. He points out the continuance of the Church despite the unworthy lives of some of its members, and calls attention to its spread over the world (cf. *Retractations, supra).* He asserts the impossibility of proving the charge of the Donatists that resulted in the schism, namely, that Caecilian was an invalidly consecrated Bishop of Carthage because his consecrator, Felix of Aptunga, was a *traditor,* that is, one who handed over the Scriptures to the Pagans on order of Diocletian.

This treatise is important, not only because of its doctrinal content as opposed to that of the schismatic Donatists, but also because, by his direct attack upon one of its respected leaders, Augustine proved himself an effective opponent of this schism.

Chapter 44

SEVEN BOOKS ON BAPTISM

(De baptismo libri septem)

I wrote seven books, *On Baptism*, against the Donatists who strive to defend themselves on the authority of the most blessed bishop and martyr Cyprian. In these, I taught that nothing is so effective as the letters and conduct of Cyprian for refuting the Donatists and completely closing their mouths so that they cannot defend their schism against the Catholic Church.

But wherever in these books I have mentioned "the Church not having spot or wrinkle,"[1] it should not be interpreted as if it were such now, but rather what it is being prepared to be[2] when, indeed, it will appear glorious.[3] For now, because of certain ignorances and infirmities of its members, its condition is such that every day the entire Church says: "Forgive us our debts."[4]

In the fourth book, when I said: "Suffering can take the place of baptism,"[5] I cited the example of the thief, which is not quite appropriate, for it is uncertain whether he had been baptized.[6]

In the seventh book, concerning the gold and silver vessels in a great house,[7] I followed the interpretation of Cyprian,[8] who considered these vessels among the goods, but those of wood and clay among the evils, applying to the former what is said: "Some indeed for honorable uses"; to the latter, on

1 Cf. *On Baptism* 1.17.26; 3.18.23; 4.3.5; 7.10.19. Cf. Eph. 5.27.
2 Cf. *On Heresies* 88; *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* 12.27 (cf. *Retr.* 2.73).
3 Cf. Eph. 5.27; Col. 3.4.
4 Cf. Matt. 6.12.
5 *On Baptism* 4.22.30; cf. Cyprian, *Letter* 73.
6 Cf. *Retr.* 1.25, quest. 62; *On Eighty-three Diverse Questions* 62.
7 Cf. *On Baptism* 7.51.99; 2 Tim. 2.20.
8 Cf. Cyprian, *Letter* 54.3.

the other hand, "but some for ignoble."[9] But I approve rather the interpretation that I found or noted at a later time in Tyconius: that among both there are some for honorable uses, and not only those of gold and silver; and again, among both there are some for ignoble, not only those of wood and clay.[10]

This work begins as follows: "In those books which . . . against the letter of Parmenian."

NOTE. The treatise, *On Baptism,* written *ca.* 400, is considered one of the most important treatises of Augustine against the schismatic Donatists. In the first book, Augustine maintains the validity of baptism administered by heretics or schismatics, but denies its efficacy while the receivers are outside the fold of the Church. In the second book, though he admits that St. Cyprian, claimed by the Donatists as a supporter of their cause because he defended the invalidity of heretical baptism, thus advocated rebaptism, yet he strongly asserts that the Donatists' use of Cyprian's arguments to support their cause is futile because Cyprian undeniably supported the unity of the Church. In fact, this unity, considered the fount of salvation, is the main idea expressed in Cyprian's works (e.g., his *De catholicae ecclesiae unitate* and *De lapsis*). In the third book, Augustine begins an examination of the letter of Cyprian to Jubaianus (correspondence of Cyprian, *Letter* 73) and refutes the arguments that the Donatists extracted from it. In the fourth book, he continues his examination of this letter of Cyprian and affirms that men *may,* but *should not,* receive baptism outside the Church and that they will not attain eternal salvation outside its fold. In the fifth book, Augustine, in order to support his argument against rebaptism, makes use of the last part of Cyprian's letter, the letters of Cyprian to Quintus (a Numidian bishop), and to Pompey (Cyprian, *Letters* 70 and 71), and the letters of the African Council to the bishops of Numidia. Nine of the eighty-one letters written by or to Cyprian (Cyprian, *Letters* 67-75) "date from the time of the controversy on heretical baptism" (Altaner, *op. cit.* 199).

One of the passages in the fifth book of the present treatise deserves special mention, namely, that in which Augustine states that when a person is converted to Catholic unity or to

9 Cf. 2 Tim. 2.20; *An Unfinished Work against Julian* 1.126; *In Answer to Cresconius* 2.43.48 (*Retr.* 2.52); *Against Gaudentius* 2.3.14 (*Retr.* 2.85); *Letter* 108.

10 Cf. Tyconius, *Book of Rules (Liber regularum)* Rule 7; *supra, Retr.* 2.30 NOTE; *Letter* 41; *Questions on the Heptateuch* 2.102.

a way of life worthy of the great sacrament of baptism, he does not receive another or lawful baptism, but the same baptism in a lawful way (*On Baptism* 5.7.9).

In the sixth and seventh books of this treatise, Augustine records the opinions of the bishops present at the Council of Carthage in 256, and comments on them.

Though Augustine did not share Cyprian's views of rebaptism, he defended him against schismatics and declared him a Catholic bishop and martyr (*On Baptism* 3.3.5). In his *Retractations (supra)*, Augustine again denounces the defense of the Donatists based on Cyprian's writings and declares that, on the contrary, Cyprian's letters and writings are the most effective weapon against them. Augustine's position on rebaptism, as discussed in the present treatise, is an important contribution to the historical development of sacramental theology.

Chapter 45

ONE BOOK AGAINST WHAT CENTURIUS BROUGHT FROM THE DONATISTS

(Contra quod adtulit Centurius a Donatistis liber unus)

While, in frequent discussions, we were directing our efforts against the party of Donatus, a certain layman brought to the church at this time certain things against us that had been spoken or written out by them in the form, as it were, of a few attestations, points that they thought supported their cause. I replied very briefly. The title of this short book is *Against What Centurius Brought from the Donatists*[1] and it begins as follows: "You say in respect of what is written in Solomon: 'To abstain from stolen water.' "[2]

NOTE. In the *Retractations,* Augustine places his treatise, *Against What Centurius Brought from the Donatists,* a non-extant work,

1 This work is lost.
2 Cf. Prov. 9.16-17.

after *On Baptism*. Hence, we can assume that it was written about 400 or 401. The only information obtainable about it is found in the *Retractations:* its title and Augustine's comments on it. From this review, we know that it was an answer to a writing of the Donatists which was delivered to Augustine by a certain layman, Centurius, who was, very probably, a Donatist; that it was polemic in character, for it contained "proofs and testimonies against us" [Catholics] which, in the eyes of the Donatists, supported their cause; and that Augustine's reply to it was brief.

If we may judge from the dispatch with which Augustine disposed of this work in the *Retractations,* this lost anti-Donatist polemic was either regarded by Augustine as not important or else he found no reason to make further comments on it.

Chapter 46

TWO BOOKS IN ANSWER TO THE INQUIRIES OF JANUARIUS

(Ad inquisitiones Ianuari libri duo)

The two books whose title is *In Answer to the Inquiries of Januarius* contain many discussions about the mysteries which the Church observes either universally or locally, that is, not equally in all places;[1] yet I could not cover everything, but I have adequately answered the inquiries. The first of these books is a letter—for, at the head, it has who is writing to whom—but this work is for this reason numbered among my books, that the second book, which does not have our names, is much more lengthy and in it many more subjects are treated.[2]

It does not occur to me how my statement in the first book about manna can be proved: "That it tasted to each one in his mouth as he wished,"[3] unless according to the Book of Wisdom, which the Jews do not accept as canonical au-

1 Cf. *Letter* 54.
2 *Letters* 54 and 55; cf. *Retr.* 46 NOTE.
3 Cf. *Letter* 54.

thority.[4] This, however, could have happened to the faithful, but not to those murmurers against God who, assuredly, would not have desired other nourishment if this manna had tasted to them as they wished.

This work begins as follows: "To those things which you asked me about."

NOTE. In his *Retractations (supra)*, Augustine tells us that the first book of his work, *In Answer to the Inquiries of Januarius*, is a letter, for the name of the writer and that of the addressee are given. Yet both books, he adds, are numbered among his "books" because of the greater length and wider scope of the discussions in the second, which is in fact a "book." Even so, the two writings have come to us in the corpus of Augustine's letters, as *Letters* 54 and 55.

Letter 54 is addressed to Januarius, "most beloved son." Augustine begins by saying that he would prefer to have Januarius answer his own questions, for, in that case, he would either agree with him or set him right. He then remarks that the answer he is sending exceeds in length his delay in replying. A statement of the basic truth of the discussion follows: our Lord Jesus Christ has subjected us to His "light" yoke and burden (as He says in the Gospel) and thereby has laid on His people the obligation of the sacraments (mysteries, rites) and of observances that do not have their origin in Scripture, but in tradition and in the Plenary Councils whose authority is well founded in the Church, such as the annual commemoration of our Lord's Passion, Resurrection, and other like observances kept by the universal Church. As to the other customs which differ according to country and locality—such as fasting, the daily or less frequent reception of Holy Communion, the offering of the Holy Sacrifice daily or less often, among others—as to these, he says, there is freedom and "there is no better rule for the earnest and prudent Christian than to act as he sees the Church act wherever he is staying" (*Letter* 54). Augustine then illustrates this point by giving an account of an experience of St. Monica, his mother, which has a bearing on the question proposed to him: when Monica found that the Church at Milan did not fast on Saturday, she asked her son for advice. He, in turn, referred the matter to Ambrose, who, after a short discussion, advised that a person, in order to avoid scandal, should follow the custom of whatever church he attends *(ibid.)*.

In the second book here under consideration, *Letter* 55, many

4 Cf. Wisd. 16.20.

topics are discussed. It was written in answer to Januarius' reminder that Augustine had not solved the rest of the difficulties set before him some time previously. Augustine replied that, despite the fact that he is overwhelmed with work, he is giving precedence to a reply to Januarius because of the latter's eager desire, a fact that pleases him. Among the questions proposed by Januarius was an inquiry concerning the reason for not having a set date for the commemoration of the Lord's Passion as for the Nativity, rather than having it depend on the sabbath and the moon. Augustine's answer is interesting: the day of the Lord's birth is not sacramental in character; therefore, it was only necessary to mark the precise natal day by devout festivity. On the other hand, he says, we celebrate Easter, not only to commemorate Christ's death and Resurrection, but also for other reasons relative to Christ. He then defends the observance of the sabbath, which, in turn, leads to a discussion of the Ten Commandments, of the time and length of the forty-day fast of Lent, and of the observance of Easter and Pentecost, "feasts with the strongest Scriptural authority" *(ibid.)*. These arguments are confirmed by references to Holy Scripture.

Toward the end of this letter-treatise, Augustine writes: "I wonder why you wanted me to write you some comments on customs which vary in different places, since there is no obligation about them, and there is one completely safe rule to be followed in such things, namely, when they are not contrary to faith or morals . . . we do not censure them, but support them by our approval and imitation—all this, of course, unless they might cause harm to others whose faith is weak. . . . The Church of God, established in the midst of much chaff and much cockle, tolerates many things, yet those that are contrary to faith and good living, it neither approves, nor accepts in silence, nor practices" *(ibid.)*.

Augustine ends the work on a humble note: "If you do not think I have covered adequately all the points you inquired about, then you have no idea of either my physical strength or my duties. Certainly, I am so far from knowing everything, as you think, that I found no part of your letter more disagreeable reading than that, because it is so obviously false." He then asserts that his knowledge of Holy Scripture is less than his ignorance of it, affirms his belief in the two commandments of love of God and of neighbor, and advises Januarius to read the texts from Holy Scripture that he has just mentioned so that he will remember that "knowledge puffeth up," for, he says, "knowledge which is used to promote love is useful, but in itself and separated from such an objective, it turns out to be not only useless, but even harmful" *(ibid.)*.

Chapter 47

ONE BOOK ON THE WORK OF MONKS

(De opere monachorum liber unus)

Necessity forced me to write a book, *On the Work of Monks:* the fact that, when monasteries began to be founded at Carthage, some monks who were obedient to the Apostle[1] were making a living by manual work, but others wanted to so live on the alms of the faithful that, although they were doing nothing to possess or obtain necessities, they thought and boasted that they, in a better way, were fulfilling the precept given to the Apostles, in which the Lord says: "Look at the birds of the air[2] and the lilies of the field."[3] As a consequence, at this time even among lay persons of inferior purpose, but, who, nevertheless, were burning with zeal, there began to arise violent quarrels by which the Church was being disturbed, some supporting the first view, others the second. In addition, certain ones among those who maintained that they should not labor wore their hair long.[4] Hence the quarrels, on the one hand, of the contentious, on the other, of those engaged, as it were, in battle, were increased in proportion to the zeal of the factions. Because of this state of affairs, the venerable elder, Aurelius, Bishop of the Church in that city, bade me to write something on this question and I complied.

This book begins as follows: "To your order, my holy brother, Aurelius."

1 Cf. 1 Thess. 4.11.
2 Cf. Matt. 6.26.
3 Cf. Matt. 6.28.
4 Cf. 1 Cor. 11.14: "Does not nature itself teach you that for a man to wear his hair long is degrading; but for a woman to wear her hair long is a glory to her?"

NOTE. It was at the behest of Aurelius, Bishop of Carthage, that Augustine wrote the treatise, *On the Work of Monks.* In the *Retractations,* where it is placed between works whose beginning or writing is assigned to about 400, Augustine indicates that he composed it at the time monasteries began to be established in Carthage.

Bishop Aurelius requested Augustine to correct a situation in a monastery of Carthage where there was division and violent contention. The faithful had become involved by becoming partisans. Some of the monks of this monastery engaged in manual labor to obtain their livelihood; others, determined to live on the alms of the faithful, refused to work. In support of their position, the latter maintained that in so acting they were fulfilling the precept given to the Apostles: "Therefore, I say unto you, be not anxious for your life . . . Consider how the lilies of the field grow . . ." (Matt. 6.25-34). Augustine supported the cause of the monks who subsisted by manual work.

At the beginning of this treatise, after a gesture of obedience to Bishop Aurelius, Augustine states his plan of discussion in brief: first, there will be a consideration of the statements of the monks who refuse to work; then, a discussion of their correction if they are wrong (cf. *On the Work of Monks* 1.2). He does not begin his argument with the passage from St. Matthew used by the monks opposed to bodily labor, but with the words of St. Paul: ". . . if any man will not work, neither let him eat" (2 Thess. 3.10), and, relying on the authority of the Gospels and the examples of St. Paul, he devotes the rest of the treatise to a defense of manual labor and to an admonition against the weaknesses and sins of human nature (1.2-33.41). Later, Augustine wrote two works, *On Grace and Free Will* and *On Admonition and Grace* for the instruction of the monks of Hadrumetum (cf. *Retractations* 2.92, 2.93).

Augustine was qualified to handle the difficult task assigned him by Bishop Aurelius. His interest in monastic life began before his baptism. It was initiated by Pontinianus' story of St. Antony of Egypt (cf. *Confessions* 8.6.14-15). After his return to Africa, Augustine and some companions lived at Tagaste a communal life (cf. Possidius, *Vita* 2-3). Later, at Hippo Regius, he established a monastery *(ibid.* 5) and he used the words of Scripture to induce others to leave all and follow Christ (cf. *Sermon* 35). His qualifications for solving the problems of the monastery in question were further enriched by active participation in the affairs and difficulties of the Church in Africa and elsewhere, often by request.

Chapter 48

ONE BOOK ON THE GOOD OF MARRIAGE

(De bono coniugali liber unus)

(1) The heresy of Jovinian,[1] by equating the merit of consecrated virgins and conjugal continence, was so influential in the city of Rome that even some nuns, about whose incontinence there had been no suspicion heretofore, were precipitated into marriage, it was said, especially by the following argument: he kept urging them saying: "Are you, then, better than Sara, better than Susanna or Anna?" and by mentioning other women, highly praised according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, to whom they could not think themselves superior or even equal. In this way, too, he shattered the holy celibacy of holy men by reminding them of and comparing them with fathers and husbands. Holy Church there [i.e., at Rome] opposed this monster very consistently and very forcefully. Nevertheless, these arguments of his, which no one dared to defend openly, had survived in the chatter and whisperings of certain persons. Therefore, it was still necessary to oppose the secretly spreading poisons with all the power which the Lord gave me, especially since they were boasting that Jovinian could not be answered by praising marriage, but only by censuring it. For this reason, I published a book whose title is *On the Good of Marriage*. The important question of the procreation of offspring before man merited death by sinning—since the coition of mortal bodies is the subject under discussion—was here deferred, but, at a later time in other writings of mine, it is, in my opinion, sufficiently explained.[2]

(2) I also said in a certain place: "For what food is to the health of the body, coition is to the health of the race, and

1 Cf. *On Heresies* 82; Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 1.3; Ambrose, *Letter* 42.
2 Cf. *On the City of God* 14.21-24.

both are not without carnal pleasure which, however, when curbed and brought to its natural function by a restraining temperance, cannot be passion."[3] This was said because the good and right use of passion is not passion. For just as it is evil to use good things in the wrong way, so it is good to use evil things in the right way. At another time, I argued more carefully on this subject, especially against the new Pelagian heretics.[4]

I do not entirely approve something I said about Abraham: "In compliance with this obedience, that patriarch, Abraham, who was not without a wife, was prepared to be without his only son and more than that, a son slain by his own hand."[5] Rather even if his son were slain, one ought to believe that he [Abraham] believed that he would soon be returned to him by being raised from the dead,[6] as we read in the epistle to the Hebrews.[7]

This book begins as follows: "Inasmuch as every man is a part of the human race."

NOTE. In the *Retractations*, this moral treatise, *On the Good of Marriage*, is placed after *On the Work of Monks* (*ca.* 401) and precedes *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* (*ca.* 401-415). In the latter work, Augustine again discusses the good of marriage and states that he has treated the subject adequately in his work, *On the Good of Marriage* (cf. *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 9.7; CSEL 28.1.275-276; *Retractations* 2.50). This work is generally thought to have been written about 401.

Augustine gives the circumstances that induced him to write this treatise (cf. *Retractations, supra*): At this time the heretical teaching of Jovinian that virginity and marriage are of equal merit was being privately promulgated with harmful effects on consecrated virgins and celibate men. He deemed it necessary "to attack these secretly spreading poisons" *(ibid.)* with all the God-given power he possessed, particularly because of the current circulation of the challenging allegation that

3 Cf. *On the Good of Marriage* 16.18.
4 Cf. *On Marriage and Concupiscence* 2.21.36 (*Retr.* 2.79); *Against Julian* 3.7.16; 5.16.60.
5 Cf. *On the Good of Marriage* 23.31.
6 Cf. *Sermon* 2.
7 Cf. Heb. 11.17-19.

Jovinian could not be refuted by praising marriage, but only by condemning it.

Jovinian taught that: (1) the state of virginity was not superior to that of marriage; (2) abstinence is no better than eating with the proper dispositions; (3) the rewards in the life to come will not depend on one's state of life on earth, but will be the same for all; (4) it is not possible for a baptized person to sin; (5) all sins are equal. Jovinian also denied the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin (cf. Ambrose, *Letter* 44; Augustine, *Against Julian* 1.2).

The errors in Jovinian's writing (not extant) were condemned at Rome in 390, in an encyclical issued by Pope Siricius (384-399), and by Ambrose at a synod held in Milan in 393. They were refuted, not only by Augustine, but also by Jerome in a treatise, *Against Jovinian (Contra Jovinianum).* Jerome extols the excellence of virginity, but speaks disparagingly of marriage. Nothing further is known of Jovinian's activities except what we learn from a remark about him made by Jerome in his work, *Contra Vigilantium,* from which it is inferred that, at the time this work was written, 409, Jovinian was dead.

It is probable that because of Jerome's depreciation of the marriage state, Augustine wrote *On the Good of Marriage* before he wrote *On Holy Virginity* (cf. *Retractations* 2.49). In the former treatise, Augustine states that the good of marriage is threefold: *proles* (offspring), *fides* (fidelity), and *sacramentum* (sacrament). (Cf. *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 9.7.)

The first good, offspring, includes both the bearing and proper rearing of children, that is, their procreation, moral and spiritual training, and education. The second good of marriage, fidelity, means, according to Augustine, the mutual faithfulness of husband and wife; its violation is adultery (cf. *ibid.).*

The meaning of the term "sacrament" as here used is not easy to determine because its signification in Augustine is wide. Since it is used as a symbol of the union of Christ and His Church, it signifies both union and indissolubility, characteristics of the marriage of Christians within the Church.

The rigorous teaching of Augustine that marital intercourse not directed to procreation is sinful prevailed, as did his other views on marriage through the patristic and early scholastic periods. The modification of these opinions began with the intensive study of marriage by St. Thomas Aquinas.

This treatise is the most complete treatment in the patristic age of the blessings and duties of married persons. It was considered by theologians the dominant and most reliable view up to the time of St. Thomas. Its refutation of a heresy, its

views on marriage and virginity, and its stress on the blessings of the married state, give it a high place among moral treatises on marriage.

Chapter 49

ONE BOOK ON HOLY VIRGINITY

(De sancta virginitate liber unus)

After I wrote *On the Good of Marriage,* I was expected to write on holy virginity, and I did not delay. Insofar as I was able, in one book I have shown: that this is a gift of God, how great a gift it is, and with what great humility it is to be guarded.

This book begins thus: "Recently I published a book, *On the Good of Marriage.*"[1]

NOTE. After he completed *On the Good of Marriage,* Augustine wrote *On Holy Virginity* because, according to him, it was taken for granted that he would do so (cf. *Retractations, supra; On Holy Virginity* 1.1). The probable date of the composition of this treatise is about 401.

Seven of Augustine's writings treat of marriage, virginity, concupiscence, and allied subjects. He reviews four of them in his *Retractations* (cf. *Retractations* 2.48; 2.49; 2.79; 2.83). The first two, *On the Good of Marriage* and *On Holy Virginity,* are directed against the heretical doctrines of Jovinian, an erstwhile monk, who, after his writings were condemned and he and eight companions were excommunicated, went to Milan. Pope Siricius sent a copy of the condemnation proceedings to Ambrose who convened a synod. There, a letter strongly approving the Pope's action was drawn up, signed by the assembled bishops, and sent by Ambrose to the Pope (cf. *Retractations* 2.48 NOTE).

At the beginning of the present work, Augustine mentions his admonition to virgins in *On the Good of Marriage,* namely, they are not to belittle "the fathers and mothers of the people of God" because they have received the more perfect gift of virginity *(On Holy Virginity* 1.1). His purpose in writing this work is clearly stated in his *Retractations (supra):* to show the

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.48 NOTE.

greatness of the gift of virginity and in what way it is to be guarded. In it, Augustine discusses virginity and consecrated virgins more profoundly and with greater insight from a theological point of view than Sts. John Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Jerome, who had also written on this subject. With remarkable spiritual understanding, he penetrates into the relationship between virginity and other aspects of Christian teaching and writes inspiringly of both. In a passage that is impressive in a marked degree, he also defends the perpetual virginity of the Blessed Virgin Mary against Jovinian's denial of it *(On Holy Virginity* 1.4; cf. *Retractations* 2.48 NOTE).

This treatise is an illuminating praise of the excellence of virginity based on Scripture (1 Cor. 7.25-35), a refutation of Jovinian's denial of the virginity of Mary, and an exhortation to consecrated virgins to preserve their virginity by following the "Lamb wherever He goes" (Apoc. 14.1-5; *On Holy Virginity* 38). It is rich in instruction and exhortations to consecrated virgins on the means to be used to keep intact the gift of virginity. Among these exhortations is Augustine's admonition on the necessity of a consecrated virgin to practice the virtue of humility *(ibid.* 39-56). A comparison between Augustine's advice to consecrated virgins in this treatise and in his famous *Letter* 211 is instructive.

Chapter 50

TWELVE BOOKS ON THE LITERAL MEANING OF GENESIS

(De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim)

At the same time, I wrote twelve books on Genesis, from the beginning up to the time Adam was driven from paradise, and a flaming sword was placed to guard the way of the tree of life.[1] But when eleven books had been completed up to this point, I added a twelfth in which there is a more detailed discussion of paradise. These books are entitled *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* because they are interpreted, not according to the allegorical significations,[2] but according

1 Cf. Gen. 3.24.
2 Cf. *Retr.* 1.9; *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans* 1.17.27; *One Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 1.1.

to historical events proper. In this work, many questions have been asked rather than solved, and of those which have been solved, fewer have been answered conclusively. Moreover, others have been proposed in such a way as to require further investigation. I began these books, then, after those on the Trinity, but I completed them before; that is why I have mentioned them at this time in the order in which I began them.

In the fifth book[3] and wherever I have cited the passage "about the offspring to whom the promise was made which was prescribed by the angels through a mediator,"[4] the Apostle does not have the same reading as the more correct manuscripts, especially the Greek, which I examined later. For what is said about the Law, many Latin manuscripts, because of an error of the translator, have as though it is said about the offspring.

What I said in the sixth book: "By sin Adam lost the image of God according to which he was made,"[5] is not to be interpreted as though no image remained in him, but that it was so deformed that there was need for re-formation.

It seems to me that in the twelfth book I ought to have taught that hell is under the earth rather than to give a reason why it is under earth, since it is believed or said to be earth, as if it were not so.[6]

3 Cf. *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 5.19.38; 9.16.30.

4 Cf. Gal. 3.19.

5 Cf. *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 6.27.28.

6 *Ibid.* 12.33. The translation is an attempt to render Knöll's text, which significantly differs from that of the Maurist and the other previous editions (in two places "earth" has been used to render the *terra* [singular] of Knöll's text which stands in one of these places instead of *terris* [plural]). The Maurist text would be rendered as follows: ". . . reason why it is believed or declared to be under the earth, as if this were not so." Augustine has in mind *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 12.33: "Enquiry is properly made as to *(a)* why the nether regions [hell] are said to be under the earth, if they are not a corporeal place *(corporalia loca* ["lieu déterminé": Raulx]), or *(b)* why they are called the nether regions if they are not under the earth." See M. Richard, *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 5.1 (1939) 101, for the importance of precisely these two texts of Augustine for the patristic answer to the question, "Where is hell?"

This work begins as follows: "All divine Scripture is divided into two parts."

NOTE. This commentary, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* one of Augustine's most important exegetical writings, is the third work written by him to explain the account of creation given in the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis. According to its author, it was begun before, but completed after, his treatise, *On the Trinity* (cf. *Retractations, supra; ibid.* 2.41). He states that its position in the *Retractations* was determined by the date it was begun *(ibid.)*. Its composition extended over a period of some years, from about 401 to 415.

The first work undertaken by Augustine to explain the Biblical account of creation and to defend it against the false teachings of the Manichaeans was an allegorical exposition, *On Genesis, against the Manichaeans,* written about 389 before the author became a priest (cf. *Retractations* 1.9). A few years later, about 393/394, he began a second work, a literal interpretation of the same passages of Genesis, with the same intention, namely, to defend this account against the errors of the Manichaeans, *An Unfinished Book on the Literal Meaning of Genesis.* Before he completed the first book, overwhelmed by the difficulty of the task and overcome by weariness, he gave up this project. Many years later, while he was writing his *Retractations* (*ca.* 426/427), coming across a copy of it, he decided to keep it. Thereupon he made some additions and released it, unfinished as it was, although he felt that the present work dealt adequately with the subject (cf. *Retractations* 1.17).

The first eleven of the twelve books of *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* deal with a literal interpretation of the creation of heaven, earth, creatures, man, and the Fall. Here, the exegesis ends. The twelfth book, actually a separate treatise, is an attempt to explain one of the most difficult passages of Scripture, namely, 2 Cor. 12.2-4: how St. Paul was caught up to the third heaven. This involved an explanation of the "three visions" and, as a result of Augustine's effort to make this obscure passage clear, this book is sometimes considered the most important part of this exegetical work, especially because of its pronounced influence on Christianity in later times.

Mention should be made here of insertions of comments on Genesis in other works of Augustine which may be called incidental, short commentaries. One of these was written before the commentaries proper, namely, Books 11-13 of the *Confessions,* where a more allegorical explanation of creation is given. The other is found in a later work, *On the City of God,* Books 11-12 (*ca.* 413-427), and is considered Augustine's

last known endeavor to explain the opening chapters of Genesis.

Despite the numerous digressions found in *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* and its defects from an exegetical point of view, this work is rightly considered the most significant attempt made during the patristic period to clarify the obscurities and explain the difficult passages of the story of creation recorded in the first chapters of Genesis.

Chapter 51

THREE BOOKS IN ANSWER TO A LETTER OF PETILIAN

(Contra litteras Petiliani libri tres)

Before I had finished the books, *On the Trinity,* and the books, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* circumstances compelled me to reply to a letter of Petilian, a Donatist, which he had written against the Catholic Church;[1] I could not postpone the reply so I wrote three books against this view. In the first of these books, I replied as quickly and as truthfully as possible to the first part of his letter which he had written to his followers, because the entire letter had not come into our hands, but only the first short part of it. This also is a letter addressed to our brethren, but is included among my books for the reason that the other two writings on the same subject *are* books. At a later time, in truth, I found the entire letter and I answered it with as much care as [I had answered the letter] to Faustus, the Manichaean,[2] that is to say, by first putting his arguments one by one under his name and, under mine, my response to each of them. What I had written before I found the entire letter, however, reached Petilian first. He, aroused to anger,

1 Cf. *Against a Letter of Petilian* 1.1.1.
2 Cf. *Retr.* 2.33.

attempted to respond by saying rather whatever he pleased against me, but in no way was it pertinent to the subject. But although it is possible to observe this most easily when both of our works are compared, yet I have taken care, for the sake of the less perceptive, to point this out in my reply. In this way, a third book was added to this same work of mine.

In the first book, this work begins thus: "You know that we have often wished"; in the second, thus: "To the first parts of the letter of Petilian"; in the third, thus: "I have read your letter, Petilian."

NOTE. Books 1 and 2 of the work, *In Answer to a Letter of Petilian*, contain a refutation of a letter against the Catholic Church written presumably by Petilian, the Donatist Bishop of Cirta (Constantine); Book 3 is a reply to Petilian's answer to Book 1. This treatise was composed *ca.* 400-403.

Petilian was born in Cirta in Numidia of Catholic parents. During his catechumenate, he was made a member of the Donatist party by force (cf. *In Answer to a Letter of Petilian* 2.105.239). He was learned and eloquent *(ibid.* 1.1.1), and used his talents to support and defend the Donatists after he was made bishop of his native city. In 411, he was selected to be one of the spokesmen and one of the seven representatives of the Donatist party at the momentous Conference of Carthage, convened on order of the Emperor Honorius and presided over by the tribune, Marcellinus. On this history-making occasion, 286 Catholic and 279 Donatist bishops assembled. Here, Augustine played a major role.

Augustine received the letter of Petilian in two parts, the first at one time, the second at a later date. As soon as he came into possession of the first part, he felt compelled to answer it immediately (cf. *Retractations, supra).* His reply (Book 1 of the present treatise), addressed to the dearly beloved brethren under his care (1.1.1), that is, to the people of the diocese of Hippo Regius, contains a warning to them against this schism and instructions on it. This book ends with an admonition (1.29.31) to love the men whose errors they are destroying.

After Augustine received the second part of Petilian's letter, which was copied and sent to him by his brethren with the suggestion that he answer it as a whole (cf. *ibid.* 2.1.1), though he felt that he had already completely answered Petilian in Book 1 (cf. *ibid.; Retractations, supra),* he acceded to their wishes by composing the second book of the present work.

Here, as he himself states (2.1.1), Augustine uses a method different from that of Book 1: he presents Petilian's arguments and his refutation of them point by point as though he and Petilian were engaged in a face to face dialogue (cf. also *Against Faustus, the Manichaean* [*Retractations* 2.33], where Augustine uses the same literary form). From the contents of this book, we learn that Petilian's letter was an abusive and strongly denunciatory attack on the Catholic Church. Augustine judged Petilian's arguments irrelevant and distorted, and charged him with being desirous of contention rather than of discussion (cf. *In Answer to a Letter of Petilian* 2.61.137-138 and 2.60.136).

When Petilian read Book 1 of Augustine's reply, he became enraged and wrote a response to it. Book 3 of Augustine's present work is a reply to Petilian's response. It begins with a fine touch of irony: Augustine, directly addressing Petilian, tells him that, since he is able to read, he has read Petilian's support of Donatism and his attack on the Church and, though in it Petilian has said nothing relevant, yet he could not keep silence (cf. *ibid.* 3.1.1). Petilian's reply, like his pastoral letter, was full of invective against the Catholic Church and against the person of Augustine. To these attacks of Petilian, Augustine opposed his own arguments one by one. The most effective of these was the exposure of the weaknesses and impertinences of Petilian's charges (cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* 111-112).

For approximately twenty more years, Augustine continued to write against the Donatist sect. The last anti-Donatist work discussed by him in his *Retractations* (2.85), *Against Gaudentius, Bishop of the Donatists,* was written about 420.

Chapter 52

FOUR BOOKS IN ANSWER TO CRESCONIUS, A GRAMMARIAN OF THE DONATIST PARTY

(Ad Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati libri quattuor)

Furthermore, after a certain Cresconius, a Donatist and grammarian, had come across that letter of mine in which I refuted the first parts of the letter of Petilian that had by

then come into our hands,[1] he thought that it should be answered and he wrote this in reply to me. To this work of his, I replied in four books in such a way, certainly, that I accomplished in three books all that a complete response required. But when I saw that all his arguments could be answered by dealing with the sole case of the Maximianists, whom the Donatists condemned as schismatics and, despite this, admitted some of them with their honors and did not repeat the baptism administered to them outside their own communion, I further added a fourth book in which, to the best of my ability, I demonstrated this carefully and clearly. Moreover, when I wrote these four books, the Emperor Honorius had already issued laws against the Donatists.[2]

This work begins as follows: "Not knowing when my writings could reach you, Cresconius."

NOTE. The work, *In Answer to Cresconius, a Grammarian of the Donatist Party,* is a refutation of a letter to Augustine from Cresconius, a Donatist layman otherwise unknown. It was composed after the promulgation in Africa (405) of the Edict of Unity issued by the Emperor Honorius against the Donatist party (cf. *Theodosian Code* 16.6.3-5; 16.11.2; *In Answer to Cresconius* 3.47.51, where these laws are referred to as *recentissimae).*

The letter of Cresconius is not extant. It was written, in all probability, about 403, shortly after the publication of the first book of Augustine's *In Answer to a Letter of Petilian* (cf. *Retractations* 2.51), which it opposes. It did not come into the hands of Augustine when it was first promulgated. Therefore, his answer to it, the present treatise, was not written until 406/407.

From this answer, we learn something about Cresconius (cf. 4.71.83; 3.25.28; 4.43.51) and are able to reconstruct the contents of his letter: arguments against the Church and its Sacraments, views similar to those of Petilian which Cresconius strongly supports; and strong objections to the application of the term "heretic" to a Donatist.

In general, Cresconius' discussion and Augustine's refutation

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.51.
2 Cf. *In Answer to Cresconius, a Grammarian of the Donatist Party* 3.43.47 *(Retr.* 2.52); *Letter* 105; *Theodosian Code* 16.5; 16.38-43; 16.52; 16.54.

of it follow the usual pattern of Augustine's anti-Donatist works where the questions on baptism (cf. *In Answer to Cresconius* 1.21.26f.), on the Donatist schism (3.12.15f.), on the suppression of the Donatists (3.45.41f. and 4.46.55), and on personal attacks on Augustine himself (3.78.90; 4.64.78f; also *Retractations* 2.51) are treated.

Of special interest here is the discussion of heresy and schism by Cresconius, who strongly resented Augustine's reference to the beliefs of the Donatists as "the sacrilegious error of those heretics" (*In Answer to Cresconius* 1.1).

Cresconius was not the first Donatist to raise this objection. Parmenian, Donatist Bishop of Carthage (355-390/391), protested against a similar designation of this sect by St. Optatus (cf. Optatus, *De schismate Donatistarum* 1.10; *Retractations* 2.43). Cresconius makes a fine distinction between heresy and schism—with which Augustine agrees—and maintains that the religion of the Donatists is a schism, not a heresy (cf. *In Answer to Cresconius* 2.4)—to which Augustine objects in a passage marked by its clarity and convincing logic (*ibid.* 2.9-10). He argues that the Donatists are guilty of heresy, which he defines as a "schism grown old."

The form of the present treatise is not usual. In the first part (Books 1-3), Augustine argues against the position of Cresconius in a manner suited to an adversary who is versed in the liberal arts. In the second part (Book 4), he refutes the arguments of the Donatists by exposing their weaknesses in their dealing with the Maximianists, a contemporary group that had separated from the Donatists: in contradiction to their position with regard to other sects, he says, they received the Maximianists into their fold without rebaptism (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

This treatise is a polemic that, like Augustine's other anti-Donatist works, weakened the Donatists' cause and helped to clarify the position of the Church on the major points of controversy between Catholics and Donatists.

Chapter 53

ONE BOOK OF PROOFS AND TESTIMONIES AGAINST THE DONATISTS

(Probationum et testimoniorum contra Donatistas liber unus)

Next, I took care that the necessary proofs, either from ecclesiastical or public acts or the canonical Scriptures, against their error and in defense of Catholic truth reach the Donatists, and, at first I sent to them a promise of these same proofs so that, if possible, they might themselves demand them. After these promises had come into the hands of certain ones among them, there came forth someone or other to write against these proofs anonymously, thereby admitting that he was a Donatist as surely as if he were called one. I wrote another book in response to him. I attached these documentary proofs to the same little book in which I had promised the same proofs, and I decided that one book should be made of both. I edited this in such a way that, posted in advance on the walls of the basilica which had belonged to the Donatists, it could be read. Its title is: *On Proofs and Testimonies against the Donatists.*

In this book,[1] we did not put the exoneration of Felix of Aptunga, the consecrator of Caecilian, in the order in which it was apparent to us at a later time after we had carefully examined the consular dates, but as though he had been exonerated after Caecilian, although this exoneration had taken place previously.

After I recalled the testimony of Jude the Apostle where he says: "These are they who set themselves apart, sensual men,

1 Cf. Optatus of Milevis, *De schismate Donatistarum adversus Parmenianum* 1.18.27 (CSEL 26). Cf. *A Summary of a Conference with the Donatists* 3.24.42 (*Retr.* 2.65); *In Reply to the Donatists after the Conference* 33.56 (*Retr.* 2.66); *Letters* 43, 88, 105: *In Answer to Cresconius, a Grammarian of the Donatist Party* 3.61.67 (*Retr.* 2.52).

not having the Spirit,"[2] I also added the words: "The Apostle Paul says about them, 'But the sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the spirit of God.' "[3] These should not be placed on the same footing as those whom schism separates completely from the Church. For the same Apostle Paul says that the former are "little ones in Christ" whom, nevertheless, He nourishes with milk because they are not yet strong enough to take solid food;[4] but the latter should not be numbered among sons, little ones, but among the dead and the lost, so that, if any one of them, after amendment, be reconciled with the Church, it can rightly be said of him: "He was dead, and has come to life; he was lost, and is found."[5]

This book begins in this way: "You who are afraid to be in accord with the Catholic Church."

NOTE. Unfortunately, this anti-Donatist treatise, *On Proofs and Testimonies against the Donatists,* and the two that follow it in the *Retractations* (2.54, 55), namely, *Against an Unnamed Donatist* and *A Warning to the Donatists respecting the Maximianists,* are not extant. All were written about 407.

The present work has an interesting history. Augustine collected data from ecclesiastical and public records and from the canonical Scriptures as proofs of Catholic truth and Donatist error, and made certain that this evidence reached the Donatists. The Donatists' looked-for protest came in the form of an anonymously written reply. In turn, Augustine wrote a refutation of this answer, *Against an Unnamed Donatist* (cf. *Retractations* 2.54), attached it to the collected data—the present treatise—and posted both on the walls of the basilica of the Donatists to make sure that they were read by his adversaries.

From the *Retractations (supra),* where this information is found, we learn also that one of the points discussed in this exchange of refutations and counter-refutations was the oft-repeated question, raised by the Donatists, of the ecclesiastical status of Felix of Aptunga, the consecrator of Caecilian as Bishop of Carthage in 312, a matter that led to the Donatist schism (cf. *Retractations* 1.19 NOTE, 2.54 NOTE).

2 Cf. Jude 1.19.
3 Cf. 1 Cor. 2.14.
4 Cf. 1 Cor. 3.1-2.
5 Cf. Luke 15.32.

Chapter 54

ONE BOOK AGAINST AN UNNAMED DONATIST

(Contra Donatistam nescio quem liber unus)

I decided that the title of another book which I mentioned above[1] should be *Against an Unnamed Donatist.* In this, likewise, the order of the time of the exoneration of the consecrator of Caecilian is not correct.[2] Moreover, my statement: "To the mass of weeds[3] among which are understood all heresies," lacks one necessary connective, for I should have said, "among which also *(et)* are understood all heresies."[4] At this time, however, I spoke as if there were weeds only outside the Church and not also in the Church, for she is the kingdom of Christ from which, at the time of the harvest, His "angels" will "gather out all scandals."[5] Cyprian, the martyr, also spoke on this subject: "Even though weeds are seen to exist in the Church, nevertheless, our faith or our charity should not be impeded so that, because we see that there are weeds in the Church, we ourselves withdraw from the Church."[6] We have also defended this view elsewhere[7] and especially in a conference against these same Donatists in their presence.[8]

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.53.
2 *Ibid.*
3 Cf. Matt. 13.36.
4 Knöll presents here, in brackets, additional words found in certain sources of the text: "or 'among which besides *(etiam)* are understood all heresies.'" Cf. von Funk, in *Theologische Quartalschrift* 8.5 (1903) 607 (in his review of CSEL 36).
5 Cf. Matt. 13.41-42.
6 Cf. Cyprian, *Letter* 54.3.
7 Cf. *In Answer to Cresconius, a Grammarian of the Donatist Party* 3.31.35; 4.56.57 (*Retr.* 2.52); *Against Gaudentius, Bishop of the Donatists* 2.3.3 (*Retr.* 2.85).
8 Cf. *A Summary of a Conference with the Donatists* 3.10.19 (*Retr.* 2.65).

This work begins as follows: "We promised proofs of relevant matters; these have been collected in a certain summary."

NOTE. Like the anti-Donatist works of Augustine directly preceding and following it in the *Retractations* (cf. 2.53 and 2.55 NOTES), the treatise entitled *Against an Unnamed Donatist* was written about 407, and, like them, it has not survived.

The scanty information we have about it is found in the *Retractations:* the denial of the validity of the consecration of Caecilian, Bishop of Carthage (312), a familiar charge of the Donatists and the one that initiated their schism, is again refuted by Augustine. Cyprian is quoted. The treatise was attached to the one discussed in the previous chapter of the *Retractations, On Proofs and Testimonies against the Donatists,* and both were posted on the walls of the Donatist basilica (cf. *Retractations* 2.53). The corrections of the present treatise made by Augustine in the *Retractations* are minor. As in the preceding chapter, the author comments on the mistake he made regarding the time of the exoneration of Caecilian and Felix of Aptunga.

Chapter 55

ONE BOOK, A WARNING TO THE DONATISTS RESPECTING THE MAXIMIANISTS

(Admonitio Donatistarum de Maximianistis, liber unus)

When I saw that, because of the difficulty of reading, many persons were being hindered from learning to what extent the party of Donatus lacks reason and truth, I composed a very brief little book. In this, I thought that these persons should be warned respecting the Maximianists alone; and that, because of the ease of copying it, it could come into the hands of more people; and, because of its brevity, it could be committed to memory more easily. To this book I have given

the title: *A Warning to the Donatists respecting the Maximianists.*

This book begins as follows: "You who are moved by the calumnies and accusations of men."

NOTE. The work entitled *A Warning to the Donatists respecting the Maximianists,* and the two anti-Donatist writings of Augustine that immediately precede it in the *Retractations* (2.53, 54), written about 407, are not preserved.

The first of these works was written to acquaint persons of limited reading ability with the faulty reasoning and falsity of the teachings of the Donatist party (cf. *Retractations, supra).* Its title and Augustine's review of it in the *Retractations* indicate that, in all probability, it was written to warn the Donatists that their treatment of the Maximianists was a contradiction of their teaching on baptism, namely, their failure to deny the validity of baptism administered by the Maximianists, a heretical sect that separated from the Donatists, thus originating another schism that weakened and eventually helped to bring Donatism to an end. Augustine made use of this contradictory position on their part more than once in his controversy with the Donatists, and in his review of his writings against them in his *Retractations.*

In this work and in earlier anti-Donatist writings (cf., for example, *Retractations* 1.19; 2.29), Augustine showed his concern for the common people by adapting the language of his arguments to their educational status and capacities.

Chapter 56

ONE BOOK ON THE DIVINATION OF DEMONS

(De divinatione daemonum liber unus)

About the same time, during a certain discussion, I felt that it was necessary to write a brief work on the divination of demons; its title is the same.

In a certain passage in this book, however, where I said: "Sometimes demons with complete ease, learn even the inten-

tions of men, not only those expressed in words, but also those conceived in thought, when certain signs of the mind are expressed by the body,"[1] I spoke on a very obscure subject with a more daring asseveration than I should; for it has been discovered, through certain actual experiences, that such thoughts come to the knowledge of demons. But whether certain signs, perceptible to them but hidden from us, are given by the body of men when they are reflecting, or whether they learn these things through another power and that a spiritual one, men can ascertain either with the greatest difficulty or not at all.

This work begins as follows: "On a certain day within the holy days of the octave."

NOTE. In his *Retractations,* Augustine states that he wrote *On the Divination of Demons* during the same period *(per idem tempus)* as the work that immediately precedes it, *A Warning to the Donatists respecting the Maximianists.* From this evidence, it is generally concluded that it was composed in the period 406-409, though a later date, 411, is sometimes assigned to it.

The first two chapters of this interesting work (1.1-2.5) are almost entirely dialogue in form. They contain a record of a disputation between Augustine and several Christian laymen. Augustine reports as follows on the beginning and subject matter of this conversation: "On a certain day within the holy octave of Easter when in the early morning many Christian lay brethren were present with me . . . a conversation arose concerning the Christian religion as opposed to the arrogance and, as it were, the notable and great knowledge of the pagans. I thought that this conversation, recorded and completed, should be set down in writing, without indicating the identity of the disputants" (cf. *On the Divination of Demons* 1.1, trans. by Brown, FC 27.421). In the last section of the second chapter, which is non-dialogue in form, Augustine speaks of the conclusion reached by the disputants, that is, their decision to discuss another subject, namely, "whence arises the divination of demons." He promises (2.6) to answer this and other questions at a later time, for he must now depart to attend an assembly of the people. He devotes the remaining chapters of this work (Chapters 3-10) to the ful-

1 Cf. *On the Divination of Demons* 5.9; *On the City of God* 8.14-15; 9.2-3; 9.18-22.

fillment of this promise by discussing the divination of demons and questions allied to it, namely, the pagan gods, their worship and questions connected with this worship, such as superstition, the magical arts, and the prescience and power to prophesy attributed to false deities.

The theme, the divination of demons, was introduced at the beginning of the disputation by one of the participants. "They [the disputants] were, however, Christians," writes Augustine, "and in their contrary arguments appeared chiefly to be searching for replies which they should make to the pagans." Thereupon, when a question was asked concerning the divination of demons and a declaration was made that someone had foretold the downfall of the Temple of Serapis which had taken place in Alexandria [this took place unexpectedly in 391 during the patriarchate of Theophilus], I replied that one should not marvel that demons could know and predict that downfall was impending their own temples and images, and other events, also, insofar as it is allowed them to know and to foretell" *(On the Divination of Demons* 1.1, FC 27.421-422; cf. *On the City of God* 9.21-22).

The subject matter of this dialogue-treatise is anticipated in two earlier works of Augustine, namely, *On the Academics* (386; cf. *Retractations* 1.1) and *On Order* (386/387; cf. *Retractations* 1.3). However, the problem of evil, which is briefly treated in the first two chapters of the present work, is more thoroughly developed in the second of the two works mentioned.

In other writings, especially in *On the City of God* (cf. *supra),* Augustine again discusses demons. Three of these works were begun before the present treatise and in part completed before its publication, as is indicated by the data given below. According to their position in the *Retractations,* these works are: (1) *On Christian Instruction,* 396/397-426/427 (cf. *Retractations* 2.30); (2) *On the Trinity,* 400-416 (cf. *Retractations* 2.41); (3) *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* 401-415 (cf. *Retractations* 2.50); (4) *On the City of God,* 413-426 (cf. *Retractations* 2.69). Another work, *Discourses on the Psalms* (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*) *ca.* 392-418 (?), is not reviewed in the *Retractations.*

In these works, we find passages that deal with what these "beings of the air," known as demons, are, where they dwell, their prescience and predictions, their trickery, superstition and their part in it, the harm they do to man, and other facets of "the prince of the power of the air about us, the prince of the spirit which now works on the unbelievers" (Eph. 2.2 [cf. 2.16, 6.12]; Col. 1.13, 1.16; Psalm 95.5). With these passages from Holy Scripture compare *On the Academics* 1.7.20.

An excellent summary of Augustine's views as expressed in *On the Divination of Demons* and in the passages of the works mentioned may be found in Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* 67-68. Van der Meer suggests that, in general, the following passages among others be compared with ideas expressed in *On the Divination of Demons*, namely, *On the City of God* 8.14, 8.15, 9.2, 9.3, 9.18-22. He makes specific comparisons between the ideas expressed in the present treatise 3.7, 4.8 with *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 2.17 and 2.37 and with *Against the Academics* 1.7.20; and of those in the present work (6.10) with those in *On the City of God* 9.22. He refers also to Augustine's change of opinion in his *Retractations* 2.56 concerning demons' power of perception as expressed in *On the Divination of Demons* 5.9 (cf. Van der Meer, *op. cit.* 68).

On the Divination of Demons is an apologetical work. Though not classed among the masterpieces of Augustine, it is timely because it was written to deal with current problems raised by laymen, and significant because it contains Augustine's ideas on the obscure question of the prediction of demons. Though in this work, Augustine did not deal as thoroughly with the problem of evil as he did in an earlier work, *On Order*, and did not treat the powers of demons as elaborately as he did in his work, *On the City of God*, he supplied the laymen who participated with him in the arguments and counter-arguments of the dialogue with answers to the questions raised by pagan interrogators, by disproving the existence of the pagan gods. He strengthened the faith of these Christians in the one true God and in the prophecies of Holy Scripture, thus preparing them more thoroughly to meet their pagan adversaries.

In his *Retractations (supra)*, Augustine corrects a pronouncement he made in the present work (5.9) about the powers of perception of demons, namely, that demons with complete ease sometimes disclose the intentions of men, even those conceived in thought, when the signs of the mind are expressed in the body. He states that he spoke with more assurance than he should have on an obscure question, because the way in which demons obtain their knowledge either cannot be ascertained or can be ascertained only with difficulty.

Chapter 57

AN EXPLANATION OF SIX QUESTIONS AGAINST THE PAGANS

(Quaestiones expositae contra paganos numero sex)

Meanwhile, from Carthage six questions were sent to me which a certain friend of mine, whom I wanted to become a Christian, proposed for solution against the pagans, particularly, he said, because some of them had been proposed by the philosopher, Porphyry.[1] I do not think, however, that this is Porphyry, the Sicilian, whose reputation is very famous. I collected the discussion of these questions in one fairly short book, whose title is *An Explanation of Six Questions against the Pagans*.[2] The first of these is: *Concerning the Resurrection;* the second: *On the Time of the Christian Religion;* the third: *On Difference in Sacrifices;* the fourth: *On What is Written, "With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you";*[3] the fifth: *On the Son of God according to Solomon;* the sixth: *On Jona, the Prophet.*

In the second of these questions, I said: "Salvation through this religion, through which alone true salvation is promised and truly promised, has never been wanting to anyone who was worthy of it, and the one to whom it was wanting, was unworthy of it."[4] I did not mean this as though anyone were worthy according to his own merits, but as the Apostle says: "Depending not on deeds but according to Him who calls it was said, 'The elder shall serve the younger,' "[5] and he asserts that this call depends on the purpose of God. Hence, he says: "Not according to our works, but according to His

1 Porphyry (233-303), a Neo-Platonist and most important follower of Plotinus, was known for his attacks on Christianity. Cf. FC 11.153 n. 8.
2 Cf. *Letter* 102; also Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop* 332.
3 Cf. Matt. 7.2.
4 Cf. *Letter* 102.2.15.
5 Cf. Rom. 9.12.

own purpose and grace."[6] Wherefore, he says likewise: "We know that for those who love God all things work together unto good for those who, according to His purpose, are called."[7] Concerning this call he says: "that He may consider you worthy of His holy calling."[8]

After the letter, which at a later time was added at the beginning, this book begins as follows: "Some persons are disturbed and inquire."

NOTE. The work, composed about 408/409, is an answer to six questions of a pagan friend sent to Augustine for solution. In his *Retractations (supra),* Augustine says that he collected the discussion of these questions into one short book entitled *An Explanation of Six Questions against the Pagans* and that later he put a letter at the beginning of this work. Both this letter and the explanation of the proposed questions are included in the Augustinian corpus in one letter, *Letter* 102.

Augustine did not receive these questions directly from his pagan friend. In the letter referred to above, written by him to Deogratias of Carthage, a fellow priest, he clearly states that the questions were referred to him by the addressee and wonders why his pagan friend, for whom he expresses great esteem and whose failure to become a Christian he regrets, did not communicate with him directly. He goes on to ask Deogratias to reply in an acceptable way to the questions as though the solution were his own and to share the answers with interested persons.

After setting out the letter, Augustine replies to the questions of his pagan friend. These answers deal with: (1) whether the resurrection of man is typified by that of Lazarus or of Christ [Augustine replies that it conforms to that of Christ]; (2) the time of the appearance of the Christian religion, a question that, according to Augustine, is given significance by its being attributed to Porphyry [in his *Retractations, supra,* Augustine says that he does not think that this is Porphyry, the famous philosopher]; (3) the assertion of the pagans that Christians censure pagan sacrifices despite the use of sacrifice in the Old Testament [in reply, Augustine defends sacrifices offered in honor of the one true God. The divine pronouncements, he says, show a distinction in sacrifices according to the times, and the offering of sacrifice at a given time has the support of divine authority]; (4) an inquiry based on the Scriptural

6 Cf. 2 Tim. 1.9.
7 Cf. Rom. 8.28.
8 Cf. 2 Thess. 1.11.

passage: "With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you" (Matt. 7.2) [Augustine examines this "misjudgment of the Gospel" and defends the words of Scripture by arguments confirmed by other references to Scripture. He ends this discussion with these words: "But now I think that it has been conclusively proved that there is no contradiction between eternal punishment and the rendering of punishment according to the measure of the sins committed"]; (5) an argument taken by the pagans from Porphyry: the pagans say, "Surely you will be kind enough to tell me whether Solomon truly said: 'God has no Son' " [Augustine denies that Solomon said this and presents arguments to prove his point]; (6) the next question concerns the swallowing of the Prophet Jona by a whale. Augustine maintains that this pagan argument is not presented as though it were based on Porphyry, but rather "as if it were a laughing-stock of the pagans," and argues that either all divine miracles are to be disbelieved or there is no reason why they should not be believed.

Chapter 58

AN EXPLANATION OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES TO THE TWELVE TRIBES

(Expositio epistulae Iacobi ad duodecim tribus)

Among my works, I found *An Explanation of the Epistle of James.* During my review of it, I noticed that what were no more than annotations for the exposition of certain passages in the Epistle had been collected into a book, through the diligence of my brethren, who did not want them to be left in the margins of the manuscript. These notes, then, are of some help; when I dictated them, however, we did not have an accurate translation of the Epistle from the Greek.

This book begins as follows: "To the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion, greetings."[1]

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1 Cf. James 1.1.

NOTE. The exegetical work, *An Explanation of the Epistle of James to the Twelve Tribes,* written about 408/409, is not extant. In his *Retractations (supra),* Augustine tells us that he found an explanation of the Epistle of James among his works, examined it anew, and noticed that marginal notes on some explained passages had been collected in a book by his diligent brethren. These notes, he says, are helpful to some extent, but, when they were dictated, an accurate translation from the Greek of this Epistle was not on hand *(ibid.).*

The loss of Augustine's interpretation of this Epistle of James to the Jewish Christians outside the Holy Land is regrettable from an exegetical and historical point of view. The interpretation by Augustine of this important encyclical authored by St. James would be of special interest, for St. James held an eminent place among early Christians. He was a relative of Christ (cf. Matt. 10.3), was sometimes referred to as His brother (cf. Gal. 1.19; Matt. 13.55; Mark 6.3), was a witness of the Resurrection according to St. Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 15.7), the first Bishop of Jerusalem according to tradition, and a martyr (62) according to Eusebius and Hegesippus.

Chapter 59

THREE BOOKS TO MARCELLINUS ON THE CONSEQUENCES AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS AND THE BAPTISM OF LITTLE CHILDREN

(De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum ad Marcellinum libri tres)

Another situation arose which forced me to write against the Pelagian heresy; we were arguing against this, when there was need, not in writings, but in sermons[1] and conferences, as each of us could or should. When, therefore, their questions were sent to me from Carthage, which I was to solve in writing, I wrote, first of all, three books whose title is: *On the Consequences and Forgiveness of Sins.*

In them, I discussed in particular the baptism of infants

1 Cf. *Sermons* 26, 27, 30, 131, 153, 155, 156, 158, 165, 169, 174, 176, 181.

because of original sin, and grace by which we are justified,[2] that is, we are made just, although in this life no one so "keeps the commandments"[3] unto justice that it is not necessary for him, in prayer, to say for his sins: "Forgive us our debts."[4] By holding opinions contrary to all these tenets, they have laid the foundations for a new heresy. In these books, then, I thought that I ought still to avoid mentioning their names,[5] with the hope that in this way they could be corrected more easily. Furthermore, in the third book—which is a letter, but considered among my "books" because of the two books with which I thought it should be combined[6]—I put the name of Pelagius himself, not without some praise, because his way of life was being publicly hailed by some persons. I argued against those tenets which he quoted in his writings, not as his own, but what he explained as the views of others. Later, however, when a convinced heretic, he defended these views with a most obstinate animosity. In fact, Caelestius, his follower, because of assertions of this kind, had already incurred excommunication at a council of bishops in Carthage at which I was not present.[7]

In a certain passage in the second book, I say: "It will indeed be granted to certain persons at the end, not to feel death because of a sudden change";[8] I put aside the passage, however, for a more careful investigation of this subject. For

2 Cf. Rom. 3.24; Titus 3.7.
3 Cf. 1 John 3.24.
4 Cf. Matt. 6.12.
5 Cf. *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* 23.47 *(Retr.* 2.73). The translation corresponds to the reading *tacenda* adopted in all earlier editions but rejected by Knöll for *tangenda,* a word which, as Jülicher rightly says *(Theologische Literaturzeitung* 28 [1903] 52f.), renders the sentence meaningless. In Books I and II of the work in question, the names of Augustine's Pelagian opponents are, in fact, not given, while Pelagius himself is named in the opening chapter of Book III and called "a man holy, as I hear, and Christian to no small profit," and, in the next, styled "a man good and worthy of praise."
6 Cf. *On the Consequences and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Little Children* 3.3.5.
7 Cf. *On Heresies* 88.
8 Cf. *On the Consequences and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Little Children* 2.31.50.

either they will not die, or, by passing from this life to death and from death to eternal life by a most rapid transition, "in the twinkling of an eye,"[9] as it were, they will not experience death.

This work begins thus: "Although in the midst of anxieties, and these great ones, attendant on concerns."

NOTE. The work addressed to Marcellinus, *On the Consequences and Forgiveness of Sins and the Baptism of Little Children,* composed in 412, is the first of a number of treatises of Augustine against the heresy of Pelagius. It is an answer Augustine felt compelled to make in response to questions sent to him from Carthage by the tribune and notary, Marcellinus (cf. *Retractations, supra).* Previous to this time, he had spoken against the errors of Pelagius in sermons and conferences *(ibid.).* Henceforth, until the closing years of his life, he wrote vigorously against Pelagianism and what was to be called "Semipelagianism." Concurrently, he continued to wage a literary battle against Donatism although that schism had declined to a degree after the Council of Carthage held in 411.

Almost nothing is known of the early life of Pelagius, the learned, ascetic lay monk. His native country is a moot question. Some early writers, among them, Augustine, Orosius, Prosper, Gennadius, and Mercator, on the basis of his cognomen, *Brito,* conclude it was Britain; St. Jerome's remarks (cf. *Comment. in Ieremiam Prophetam 3 Praef.:* PL 24 [1845] 758) suggest Scotland; some modern writers, on the untrustworthy assumption that the Greek form of his name, *Pelagios,* is equivalent to the Welsh name *Morgan* (=*Marigena,* "of the sea," "from the sea"), Wales. It seems quite probable, at any rate, that Pelagius was of Celtic origin.

Pelagius first appears on the pages of history during the earliest period of the controversy that bears his name (412-419). Henceforth, nothing is known in detail of his life or career, although his teachings lived on in Pelagianism and related teachings for more than a century, that is, for some years after their condemnation by the Synod of Orange in 529 (cf. *infra).*

It is certain that Pelagius lived in Rome for some years before he and his brilliant lawyer associate, Caelestius, left that city in 410, the year the Goths under Alaric plundered it (cf. Augustine, *Letter* 177.2). From there, Pelagius went to North Africa, passing through Hippo during the absence of Augustine (cf. *Letter* 124). After a short time in Africa, he went

9 Cf. 1 Cor. 15.52.

to Palestine. Caelestius stayed on in Africa until he took refuge in Ephesus after the teachings of Pelagius disseminated by him were condemned by the Council of Carthage in 411/412. He had proved himself an able and zealous propagator of the views of Pelagius during his sojourn in North Africa, but failed in his efforts to be ordained a priest. This he successfully accomplished in Ephesus.

Information about the erroneous doctrines of Pelagius are obtained from his writings (for a list, cf. Altaner, *op. cit.*, 439-441), from fragments of his works, and from citations and discussions in the writings of others. Among the last mentioned, Augustine's writings hold an important place.

Augustine's anti-Pelagian treatises may be divided into those against: (1) Pelagius and Caelestius, 412-419; (2) Julian, Bishop of Eclanum, 419-430; (3) Semipelagianism, sometimes characterized as a modified form of Pelagianism, 426-430.

In his *Retractations*, Augustine reviews twelve of the sixteen principal works of his corpus (fifteen are listed by those who omit the anti-Pelagian letter-treatise, *Letter* 140, *On Grace in the New Testament;* cf. *Retractations* 2.62). *On the Perfection of Righteousness in Man (De perfectione iustitiae hominis, ca.* 415, PL 44.291-318; CSEL 43), and the three Semipelagian polemics composed after the *Retractations*, namely, *On the Predestination of the Saints (De praedestinatione sanctorum), On the Gift of Perseverance (De dono perseverantiae, ca.* 428/429), and the work interrupted by his death, *An Incomplete Work against Julian (Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum,* 429/430) are not included in the *Retractations.*

The errors of the Pelagians, founded on the pagan philosophy of Stoicism, deviated from the teaching of Christianity on two fundamental doctrines: they denied original sin and the necessity of supernatural grace for man's salvation. These errors as propagated by Caelestius, and drawn up and condemned by the Council of Carthage, were, in brief: (1) the guilt of the sin of Adam was not transmitted to his descendants, the human race, a denial of original sin; (2) man was destined to die whether or not Adam sinned; (3) newborn infants are in the same spiritual state as Adam before he sinned; (4) the human race does not suffer death because of Adam's sin, nor will it rise as a result of Christ's Resurrection; (5) unbaptized infants possess eternal life, but not the kingdom of heaven; and (6) man could live without sin as he did before Christ's coming, guided by the Law, just as well as now, guided by the Gospel. By nature, he is quite capable of doing and willing good; neither actual nor sanctifying grace have efficacy with respect to the working of man's will.

The errors of Pelagianism were condemned over a period of

years by several Church Councils, namely, the Council of Carthage, 412; the Synods of Jerusalem and Diospolis (Lydda), 415 (Pelagius succeeded in being exonerated by these two Councils); a Synod held in Carthage, where in 416, although the decisions of the Synod of Diospolis came to light, the condemnations of 412 were upheld, and a letter was sent to Pope Innocent I; the Synod of Milevis, held the same year in Numidia, at which time a letter was sent to Pope Innocent by Augustine and five other bishops asking for Pelagius' condemnation; a Synod at Rome in 417, at which Pope Innocent confirmed the condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius (Pope Zosimus, who succeeded Innocent, at first exonerated Pelagius, but later, under pressure brought by the bishops of Carthage after the Councils of Carthage 417/418, reversed this decision, stating his position in the famous *Epistola tractoria,* an encyclical to which eighteen bishops of Italy refused to subscribe, among them Julian of Eclanum, and were deposed. Cf. *Letter* 190 where a fragment of this encyclical is preserved; *Retractations* 2.88); and the General Council of Ephesus, 431, which again condemned the Pelagian heresy.

This heresy, however, continued in the West. It was again condemned at the Council of Orange, 529 (cf. K. Bihlmeyer and H. Tüchle, *op. cit.* 289). Its downfall finally came during the second half of the sixth century.

In the first book of the present treatise, Augustine shows that Adam's fall is the cause of man's death and of sin inherited by man including infants, and hence, infant baptism is necessary. In the second book, he refutes Pelagius' views of sinlessness. In the third book, he argues against the errors of Pelagius on the consequences of sin and the baptism of infants, arguments contained in Pelagius' *Expositions of the Epistles of St. Paul,* in which are found the basic errors of Pelagianism and which were circulated in revised forms under the names of Jerome and Primasius of Hadrumetum (for the editions, cf. B. Altaner, *op. cit.* 439).

The treatise under consideration and the treatise *On the Spirit and the Letter* (cf. *Retractations* 2.63), which is a kind of sequel to it, contain Augustine's first proofs of original sin, the need for baptism, and the necessity of interior grace for man's salvation. Both of these works are addressed to the author's friend, Marcellinus.

Chapter 60

ONE BOOK ON ONE BAPTISM AGAINST PETILIAN OF CONSTANTINE

(De unico baptismo contra Petilianum ad Constantinum liber unus)

At this time, a certain friend of mine received a book on one baptism from some Donatist priest or other who indicated that Petilian, their bishop at Constantine, wrote it. He brought this book to me and urgently entreated me to answer it and I did so. I decided that the book of mine in which I replied should have the same title, that is, *On One Baptism*.

I said in this book that "the Emperor Constantine did not refuse the right of accusation to the Donatists who were accusing the consecrator of Caecilian, Felix of Aptunga, even though he knew that they, by their false accusations, were calumniating Caecilian."[1] When considered in the order of events, this was found at a later time to be otherwise.[2] For the aforesaid emperor had the case of Felix heard by a proconsul by whom he was declared exonerated, and later, he himself found Caecilian innocent after he, together with his accusers, had been given a hearing during which he [the Emperor] found out that they [the accusers] were calumniating him [Caecilian]. And this order of events, determined by the consular dates, demonstrated with all the greater certainty the calumnies of the Donatists in this case, and completely destroyed them, as I have shown elsewhere.[3]

This book begins thus: "To reply to those who have opposing views."

NOTE. The work entitled *On One Baptism, against Petilian of Constantine* is the twelfth anti-Donatist work of Augustine and

1 Cf. *On One Baptism* 16.28.
2 Cf. *On Faith and Works* 4.6 (*Retr.* 2.64); *Letter* 43.2.5.
3 Cf. *Retr.* 2.53.2.

the second (cf. *Retractations* 2.51) written by him against Petilian, Donatist Bishop of Constantine (Cirta), examined up to this point by him in the *Retractations*. Of these twelve, only six are extant (cf. *Retractations* 1.19; 1.20; 2.31; 2.43; 2.44; 2.45; 2.51; 2.52, 2.53; 2.54; 2.55; 2.60 NOTES).

This treatise, written about 410, is the second work of Augustine on baptism (the first is entitled simply *On Baptism;* cf. *Retractations* 2.44). It is a refutation of Petilian's *On One Baptism (De unico baptismo)* preserved to us, in fragment form, by Augustine in his reply to it, to which he chose to give the same title (cf. *Retractations, supra)*. As the title indicates, Augustine held that baptism, properly administered by heretics or schismatics, was valid, but not licit if the recipient was outside the fold of the Church. Hence, he argued, there is no need for rebaptism (cf. *De unico baptismo* 8; CSEL 53.14-15). This argument was opposed to that of the Donatists, who, apparently, insisted that converts to Donatism from Catholicism be baptized anew. They refused to accept the position that a Sacrament could be valid and, at the same time, lack its full efficacy. In their dealings with the Maximianists, however, as was mentioned above, they did not require rebaptism (cf. *Retractations* 2.55. Cf. also *On One Baptism* 8; *Against Cresconius* 1.27; 3.24; 4.46, etc., CSEL 52.323-582; *On Baptism, against the Donatists* 1.3; 1.18; 3.19, etc.; *Sermon* 71.32-33; and *Letter* 93, where this same view is expressed in different terms). By repeated arguments in these writings, Augustine drives home his points in a way that both challenges and ably refutes the talented Petilian, his bitter adversary.

In the present work, important for the theological development of the Sacraments, Augustine takes the stand held by the Church in the early part of the third century, when the controversy on the validity of the administration of the Sacraments by heretics began and when the theology of it was by no means perfectly developed. It will be recalled that Cyprian, at that time, took an active part in this controversy (cf. *Retractations* 2.55).

Chapter 61

ONE BOOK AGAINST THE DONATISTS RESPECTING THE MAXIMIANISTS

(De Maximianistis contra Donatistas liber unus)

In the midst of other works, I also composed a book against the Donatists, not a very short one as previously, but extensive, and written with much greater care. In this book, it is clear how the single case of the Maximianists,[1] a schism which was formed from the very party of Donatus, utterly overthrows their impious and most arrogant error against the Catholic Church.[2]

This book begins as follows: "Much have we said already, much already have we written."

NOTES. About five years before Augustine wrote the treatise, *Against the Donatists respecting the Maximianists,* he had written a work to the Donatists to remind them of their inconsistency in dealing with the Maximianists and entitled it *A Warning to the Donatists respecting the Maximianists* (cf. *Retractations* 2.55). In order to make this work available to as many people as possible, he used simple language and treated the subject briefly. It is not preserved.

The longer treatise mentioned here was written about 412, with the same intention, namely, deliberately to call the attention of the Donatists to the contradiction between their teachings on rebaptism and their application of it to the Maximianists (cf. *Letter* 93). It is not possible to reconstruct fully the arguments used by Augustine in this work, for it, too, is lost. From its title and from Augustine's present comments on it, as well as from Augustine's other writings dealing with the Maximianists (cf. *Retractations* 2.55; 2.61), we may conclude that it was written to prove that the Donatists, by not requiring the Maximianists to be baptized when they were converted to Donatism although they required that other converts be rebaptized, were acting inconsistently and contrary to their own teachings.

1 Cf. *A Warning to the Donatists respecting the Maximianists (Retr.* 2.55).

2 Cf. *On Baptism* 1.6.6; *On Heresies* 69; *Letter* 76; *Retr.* 2.44.

Chapter 62

ONE BOOK ON GRACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, TO HONORATUS

(De gratia testamenti novi ad Honoratum liber unus)

During the same period in which we were vigorously engaged in opposing the Donatists and had already begun to be preoccupied with opposing the Pelagians, a certain friend sent five questions to me from Carthage and asked me to explain them to him in writing. They are: *What does this utterance signify, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*[1]; *What is the meaning of the Apostle's words, "that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth"?*[2]; *Who are "the five foolish virgins" and who "the wise"?*[3]; *What is "the darkness outside"?*[4]; *How are we to interpret, "The word was made flesh"?*[5]

But in considering the heresy mentioned above, the new enemy of the grace of God, I proposed to myself a sixth question, *On Grace in the New Testament.* In discussing this, after I had inserted an explanation of the twenty-first Psalm, at the beginning of which is written what the Lord cried aloud on the cross, a passage which that friend proposed to me to be explained first, I answered the entire five, not in the order in which they were proposed, but as they could occur to me in their right places, so to speak, when I was discussing grace in the New Testament.[6]

This book begins as follows: "You have proposed to me five questions for investigation."

1 Cf. Ps. 21.2; Matt. 27.46.
2 Cf. Eph. 3.17-19.
3 Cf. Matt. 25.2-4.
4 Cf. Matt. 22.13.
5 John 1.14.
6 Cf. *Letter* 140, to Honoratus.

NOTE. Augustine tells us here that he wrote the work, *On Grace in the New Testament, to Honoratus*, in the midst of his vigorous opposition to the Donatists and at the beginning of his involvement in the Pelagian controversy. From its position in the *Retractations*, where it comes immediately before *On the Spirit and the Letter*, and from the above statement, we may conclude that it was composed about 412.

This letter-treatise is preserved among Augustine's letters (*Letter* 140). Its title is sometimes translated *The Book on Grace, As Set Forth in the New Testament* (cf. FC 20.58). It is addressed to Honoratus, a catechumen, in reply to his request that Augustine explain five questions relating to the following passages of Holy Scripture: Ps. 21.2, Matt. 27.46, Mark 15.34, Eph. 3.18, Matt. 25.2, Matt. 8.12 and 22.13, and John 1.14. Augustine, in turn, asked Honoratus to agree to his adding a sixth question: "on grace in the New Testament" (cf. *Letter* 140; *Retractations, supra*). A search for the meaning of grace as stated in Scripture, he adds, would mean that the questions asked by Honoratus would be directed to the same end.

When Augustine proposed the sixth question, he had in mind the Pelagian heresy which he had just begun to attack. During his exegesis of the passages whose explanation Honoratus had requested, Augustine planned to introduce the subject of the Pelagian heresy as it occurred to him and thus incorporate a further attack on Pelagianism with a treatment of the doctrine on grace according to the New Testament.

Chapter 63

ONE BOOK ON THE SPIRIT AND THE LETTER, TO MARCELLINUS

(De spiritu et littera ad Marcellinum liber unus)

The person to whom I had written the three books entitled *On the Consequences and Forgiveness of Sins*, in which the baptism of infants is also carefully discussed,[1] wrote in reply to me that he was greatly disturbed because I said that,

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.59. Augustine mentions *On the Spirit and the Letter* in two other works: *On Faith and Works* 14.21 and *On Christian Instruction* 3.33.46 (*Retr.* 2.64 and 2.30).

with the help of God, it can happen that a man be free from sin if his will is not wanting, although, in this life, no one has ever been, is, or will be of such perfect righteousness. Indeed, he asked how I could state that something of whose occurrence there is no precedent could happen. Because of this inquiry of his, I wrote the book whose title is *On the Spirit and the Letter.* In this, I treat in detail the statement of the Apostle where he says: "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life."[2]

In this book, to the extent that God helped, I argued sharply against the enemies of the grace of God by which the ungodly man is justified.[3] But when I was discussing the observances of the Jews who abstain from certain foods in accordance with the Old Law, I said, "the *ceremonies* of certain foods,"[4] a term which is not in use in Holy Scripture, but which, nevertheless, seemed appropriate to me because I remembered that *cerimoniae* [ceremonies][5]—*carimoniae,* as it were—is derived from *carere* [to be lacking], because they who observe them lack those things from which they abstain. But if there is another derivation of this word which is inconsistent with true religion, I did not speak according to it, but according to the one I mentioned above.

This book begins as follows: "After reading the works which I recently prepared for you, dearly beloved son, Marcellinus."

NOTE. The treatise, *On the Spirit and the Letter, to Marcellinus,* is a sequel to Augustine's first anti-Pelagian work *On the Consequences and Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism of Little Children* (cf. *Retractations* 2.59). Both were written in 412. The former was designed to dispel the perplexity of the tribune and notary, Marcellinus, who was disturbed by Augustine's seemingly contradictory statement in the second work:

2 Cf. 2 Cor. 3.6.
3 Cf. Rom. 4.1-8.
4 Cf. *On the Spirit and the Letter* 21.36. The phrase, *quarundam escarum ceremoniae,* pertains to regulations regarding particular foods. Cf. also *Letter* 82.
5 Cf. Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights (Noctes Atticae)* 4.9.8.

that, with the help of God and man's free will, man may be without sin; yet there is no man who has ever been, is, or will be in a state of sinlessness in this life, except Christ (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

Augustine resolved Marcellinus' difficulties by expounding the teaching of St. Paul in 2 Cor. 3.6: "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life." God's grace *(spiritus)*, explains Augustine, is necessary to enable man to fulfill the law *(littera)*. The grace of the Holy Spirit, interior grace, vivifies; the law alone, exterior grace, destroys life.

In concluding this treatise, Augustine summarizes his discussion (cf. 61-66). In brief, he states that perfect righteousness is not impossible for man, though there is no example of it among men, but we lack examples of many things that are possible to God. Illustrations of this point follow. Perfect righteousness in a man, he continues, would mean that he had a perfect knowledge of God. This knowledge cannot be acquired in this life, for it would include, not only a perfect love for God, but also a perfect love for and delight in doing right. A "lesser" righteousness, the condition of a man who lacks a desire to do evil, is, however, possible in this life. Even then a man prays: "Forgive us our trespasses."

In this treatise, Augustine amplifies the distinction between interior grace, the spirit of the law, and exterior grace, the letter of the law. In this way, he clarifies obscurities found in the earlier work mentioned at the opening of this note (cf. *Retractations* 2.59 NOTE).

Chapter 64

ONE BOOK ON FAITH AND WORKS

(De fide et operibus liber unus)

Meanwhile, certain brethren—laymen, in truth, but well-versed in the Divine Scriptures—sent to me certain writings which separated Christian faith and good works so as to lead one to believe that it is impossible to attain eternal salvation without the former [faith], but that it is possible to do so without the latter. In response to them, I wrote a book

whose title is *On Faith and Works*. In this book, I discussed not only how they who have been regenerated by the grace of Christ are to live, but also what kind of persons are to be admitted to "the bath of regeneration."[1]

This book begins as follows: "Certain persons are of the opinion."

NOTE. While in the process of writing his greatest dogmatic work, *On the Trinity (ca.* 400-416), Augustine wrote another dogmatic treatise, *On Faith and Works*. There is some difference of opinion about the date of its composition, which, however, is usually given as about 413. (For a discussion of the date of this work, cf. FC 27, Introduction, 218-219.)

This treatise is the fourth dogmatic work examined by Augustine in his *Retractations* (cf. *Retractations* 1.25; 2.27; 2.41); there he briefly summarizes the work by saying that he discussed in it the way in which baptized persons are to live and what manner of person is to be admitted to baptism. It is often classed with two other writings of Augustine dealing with faith: (1) *On Faith in Things Unseen*, a work not reviewed in the *Retractations* because it may have been a sermon, as the words "my dearly beloved" seem to indicate (cf. FC 4, Introduction, 446-447); (2) *Letter* 120, to Consentius.

According to Augustine (cf. *Retractations, supra)*, the following circumstances occasioned the writing of this work. Some Christian laymen, well-versed in the Scriptures, sent certain writings to him. In them, they presented their arguments in a way designed to lead to the conviction that, by faith alone, one can attain eternal salvation and, accordingly, good works are not necessary in order to obtain eternal life. Augustine opposes these erroneous views. First, he opposes the argument that faith and good works are disassociated, that is, that only the former is necessary for salvation (cf. *On Faith and Works* 1.1-6.8). Next, he refutes the view that candidates for baptism are to be baptized first and then instructed in a right way of living (cf. *ibid.* 6.9-13.20). Last, he argues against the error that all "should be admitted to baptism indiscriminately" and that those who on earth persist in certain evils, here numerated and discussed, "will be saved by fire" (cf. *ibid.* 14.21-26.48; 15.25).

Augustine attests his confidence in this work and indicates its significance by references to it in other writings authored by him, for example, in *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* (18.67), written about 421 (cf. *Retractations* 2.89), where he writes:

1 Cf. Titus 3.5.

"For Holy Scripture, when consulted, gives a different answer" [a reference to the belief just mentioned that those who persevere in sin will be "saved by fire"]. "I have written a book on this question under the title *On Faith and Works*, in which, as far as I was able, following the Holy Scriptures and God helping me, I have shown that the faith which saves us is that clearly described by the Apostle Paul when he says . . ." [here Augustine quotes Gal. 5.6] (FC 2.425-426); and in the *Eight Questions of Dulcitius* (Question 1), *ca.* 423 or 425 (cf. *Retractations* 2.91), where, after stating the first question of Dulcitius, viz. whether those who sin after baptism ever go out from hell, he says: "I will answer you from my book entitled *On Faith and Works*, in which I have written as follows on this subject: 'James,' I say, 'was so extremely disturbed by those who suggest that faith without works is sufficient to salvation that he even compared such men to devils, saying . . .' " [here Augustine quotes from James 2.19] (FC 16.428-429). Augustine's third mention of this work is made in a letter to Consentius (*Letter* 205, *ca.* 420), where he writes: "On that question which you thought should be raised, whether all the baptized who may go out of the body without repentance, entangled in various crimes, may attain pardon at some time, I have written a book of considerable length, and if you care to copy it, you will probably not look for anything further on the subject" (FC 32.20-21).

Chapter 65

THREE BOOKS, AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE CONFERENCE WITH THE DONATISTS

(Breviculus conlationis cum Donatistis, libri tres)

After we held our conference with the Donatists, I briefly recalled what had transpired and set this out in writing according to the three days during which we conferred with them. I considered this work useful because, by referring to it, anyone either may learn without effort what took place or, by consulting the numbers which I have marked for in-

dividual topics, may read in the proceedings themselves at the right place whatever he may wish, for they [i.e. the unabridged proceedings] tire the reader because of their excessive length. The title of this work, therefore, is *An Abridgment of the Conference.*[1]

This book begins as follows: "When the Catholic bishops and those of the party of Donatus."

NOTE. Augustine's work, *An Abridgment of the Conference with the Donatists,* written *ca.* 412, is an epitome of the records or minutes of the famous conference of Catholic and Donatist bishops held in Carthage in 411 on order of Emperor Honorius under the presidency of his representative, Count Marcellinus (cf. *Retractations* 2.43 NOTE), in an attempt to reconcile their differences and thus end a schism that had harassed and threatened the Church for a century. As a result of this conference, Donatism was considerably weakened and began to decline (cf. *ibid.* 1.19, 2.43, 2.74 NOTES; *Letter* 185, to Boniface). Augustine wrote this abridgment in order to make the carefully recorded but bulky records of this conference more useful and accessible (cf. *ibid., supra).* To further this purpose, he used numbers that corresponded to those found in these official records *(ibid.).* At this time, he also wrote a letter *(Letter* 141, June 14, 412) addressed to several bishops and an abbot in order to make known to them a true account of this Council (cf. *ibid.* 2.66).

In two other letters *(Letter* 139, 412 A.D., to Marcellinus, and *Letter* 185, 417 A.D., to Boniface), Augustine refers to this summary. In the first of these letters, *Letter* 139, he tells his correspondent that he is eagerly awaiting the promised records of the conference which, he says, he is anxious to have read in the church in Hippo and in all the churches of the diocese. In this same letter, he speaks of this summary as "a laborious task which fell to me when I saw that no one was willing to lend himself to the reading of such a pile of documents" (FC 20.56). In the second of these letters, *Letter* 185, which is a treatise-letter with which we shall deal later *(Retractations* 2.74 NOTE), he suggests that his addressee read this summary: "It would be a long task for you, occupied as you are with other matters necessary to the peace of Rome, to read how they [the Donatists] were vanquished at every point in that conference, because the minutes of the meeting are excessively full, but perhaps it would be possible to have the summary read to you, which I believe my brother and fellow bishop

1 Cf. *Letter* 139.3 and *Letter* 140.

Optatus (cf. *Letter* 141) has, or if he does not have it, he can get it for you very easily from the church at Sitifis" (FC 30.147).

As he intended, Augustine performed a useful service by epitomizing the official records of this historical conference. The value of this abridged, carefully arranged work is further enhanced by the fact that parts of the unabridged document are not extant (cf. *Gesta collationis, Carthagini habitae Honorii Caesaris iussu inter Catholicos et Donatistas* PL 11.1223-1420, especially the *Praefatio,* 1224).

Chapter 66

ONE BOOK IN REPLY TO THE DONATISTS AFTER THE CONFERENCE

(Post conlationem contra Donatistas liber unus)

I also wrote with great care a book of adequate length, in my opinion, to the same Donatists after the conference which we held with their bishops, so that they would not be led further astray by them. In this book, I even refuted some of their falsehoods, which had found their way to us, and which, although vanquished, they circulated wherever and in what manner they could—this in addition to what I said concerning the proceedings of the conference, from which one could learn in brief what had taken place. In a certain letter addressed to the same Donatists,[1] I treated a second time the same subject, but much more briefly. But since at the Council of Numidia it was resolved by all of us who were present that this be done, it is not among my letters. In fact, it begins thus: "Silvanus (Primate), Valentine, Innocent, Maximinus, Optatus, Augustine, Donatus, and the other bishops from the Council of Zerta,[2] to the Donatists."[3]

1 *Letter* 76, written in 402, FC 12.368.
2 Zerta is believed by some to be Cirta or Constantine; cf. FC 20.136 n. 2.
3 *Letter* 141. This letter is a compendium of a treatise; cf. FC, *ibid.*

This book begins as follows: "Why, Donatists, are you led astray?"

NOTE. Augustine composed the treatise, *In Reply to the Donatists after the Conference,* after both the famous conference of Donatist and Catholic bishops at Carthage in 411, and the one of Catholic bishops held in Cirta (Constantine) June 14, 412. Its probable date of composition is the latter part of 412 (cf. *Retractations, supra).* His purpose was to prevent the Donatist laity, for whom he composed it, from being further deceived by their bishops (cf. *ibid.* and *In Reply to the Donatists after the Conference* 1.1). In it, he exposes and replies to the falsehoods concerning the great Conference which the Donatist bishops were circulating constantly and in every possible place. To offset these false reports, he gives a correct account of what transpired there.

Augustine states that all the facts given in this treatise are presented in a briefer form in a letter, *Letter* 141, a compendium of this treatise (cf. *Retractations* 2.65), addressed to the Donatist laity by the bishops of the Council of Cirta *(ibid.)* who had assembled to discuss the Catholic-Donatist problems that arose after this conference. Prominent among these was the question of the reunion of the Donatists with the Church. The present account or treatise had the same purpose as that of the summary or *Breviculus, An Abridgment of the Conference with the Donatists,* treated in the preceding chapter of the *Retractations* (2.65): to acquaint with the proceedings of the conference either those who did not have access to the voluminous records or those who found the reading of them difficult and tiresome (cf. *Letter* 141).

The present eloquent treatise starts with an arresting question: "Why, Donatists, are you still led astray by your bishops whose false obscurities have been clearly discussed?" Augustine then proceeds to expose the falsity of the reports of the Conference made by the Donatist bishops and to present to them the truth. Toward the end of this reply to the Donatists (34.57), he strongly urges the laity to completely abandon the Donatist party. He ends with a moving, persuasive, Christ-like plea for unity.

Chapter 67

ONE BOOK ON THE VISION OF GOD

(De videndo Deo liber unus)

I wrote a book, *On the Vision of God,*[1] in which I put off until later a more careful investigation of the spiritual body which will exist at the resurrection of saints: whether or how God "who is spirit"[2] can be seen by such a body. Later, however, in the last, that is, the twenty-second book of *On the City of God,*[3] I adequately explained, in my opinion, this truly most difficult question. I even found in a certain manuscript of mine, in which there is this book also, a kind of memorandum made by me on this subject to the Bishop of Sicca, Fortunatian,[4] which is not recorded in the catalogue of my works, either among my books or letters.[5]

This book begins thus: "Conscious of the debt." The memorandum begins: "Just as I asked you at our meeting, now I also remind you."

NOTE. The letter-treatise, *On the Vision of God, Letter* 147 in the collection of Augustine's correspondence, is addressed to a noble lady *(clarissima),* Paulina, possibly a religious ("a devout servant of God"), who had asked Augustine to write to her at length and in detail about the invisible God and to tell her whether He can be seen by bodily eyes *(Letter* 147). Augustine refers to this work as "one book on the vision of God" (cf. *Retractations, supra).* This topic, in his estimation, is "a deep subject" (cf. *Letter* 147).

After preliminary remarks to Paulina and an introduction to the main theme, the vision of God, Augustine gives a brief

1 This is *Letter* 147; cf. *Retr.* 2.67 NOTE.
2 Cf. John 4.24.
3 Cf. *On the City of God* 22.29.
4 Bishop of Sicca Veneria, one of the seven chosen to present and defend the Catholic cause at the Conference of Carthage held in 411.
5 Cf. *Letter* 148, a *commonitorium.* For the catalogue Augustine is referring to, see B. Altaner, in *Theological Studies* 9 (1948) 600.

summary of his argument: "Since, therefore, we do not see God in this life, either with bodily eyes, as we see heavenly or earthly bodies, or with the gaze of the mind, as we see some of those things which I have mentioned and which you most certainly behold within yourself, why do we believe that He is seen, except that we rest our faith upon the Scripture, where we read: 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God' [Matt. 5.8], and upon any other writings to this effect with the same divine authority? Of this we believe that it is forbidden to doubt, and we do not doubt that it is an act of piety to believe" *(Letter* 147, FC 20.172). Further on, he remarks that only those things presented in the course of his argument which are supported by the authority of divine Scripture are to be believed without reservation *(ibid.* 173). The arguments that immediately follow are richly illustrated, and confirmed by references to the Scriptures.

"If these distinctions are now clear," continues Augustine, "let us come to the main point. We know that God can be seen, because it is written: 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God'" [Matt. 5.8] (FC 20.179-180). He then questions the seemingly contradictory passage: "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1.18), and other passages of Holy Scripture of the same nature (cf. e.g. John 4.12), and proceeds to resolve the apparent contradictions (FC 20.180-181).

Later he writes: "Now, note carefully and recall what has been said, so as to see whether I have explained what you submitted to me, and what seemed difficult to explain. If you ask whether God can be seen, I answer: He can. If you ask how I know, I answer that we read in Scripture, the source of truth: 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God' [Matt. 5.8] and other passages of like tenor. If you ask how He is said to be invisible if He can be seen, I answer that He is invisible by nature, but He is seen when He wills and as He wills" (FC 20.204). It will be recalled that Paulina's questions were concerned with the invisible God and the possibility of seeing Him with bodily eyes.

In the last chapters of this letter-treatise, Augustine develops further his explanation of certain Scriptural passages and discusses the spiritual body. Though he continues to argue that God cannot be seen by corporal eyes, his presentation of the argument is less absolute than in *Letter* 92 (cf. *infra).* He ends the present work as follows: "But let this be enough to say, and when you consider, after reading and rereading all of it from the beginning of my treatise, you will probably perceive with certainty that a clean heart ought to prepare you, with His help, to see God. As for the spiritual body, I will try in another work to see what arguments I can find, with the Lord's

help" (FC 20.223-224). The work he refers to here is *On the City of God* (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

Including the present treatise, we possess six writings of Augustine devoted, in whole or in part, to the subject of the vision of God and the spiritual body after the resurrection. Two of these are mentioned in the *Retractations*, namely, *Letter* 148 (the *commonitorium* to Fortunatian), and *On the City of God*. Chronologically arranged, these six writings are: *Letter* 92, 408; *Letter* 147, the present treatise, *ca.* 413; *Letter* 148, *ca.* 413; *Sermon* 277, *ca.* 413 (PL 38.1257-1268); *Letter* 162, *ca.* 414, and *On the City of God*, 413-426. Only a brief treatment of each of these works, exclusive of the present treatise discussed above, can be given here.

The first of these writings, *Letter* 92, written about five years before the present treatise, is addressed to a certain noble lady, Italica, who had recently lost her husband. In it, the view that God can be seen with corporal eyes is positively rejected. "Some of those who babble such things," Augustine says, . . . "say that we see God now with our mind, but then we shall see him with fleshly sight" (FC 18.52). He calls this idea madness (*ibid.* 54). In the present treatise, *Letter* 147, he treats this view with more indulgence, though he is still definitely opposed to it. At the head of a letter written about the same time, *ca.* 413, to Fortunatian, bishop of an important Numidian town, Sicca, Augustine writes: "A memorandum [or "reminder"] to his holy brother, Fortunatian" (cf. *Retractations, supra*). In this letter, Augustine again discusses the questions of seeing God, and the spiritual body (cf. *Letter* 148). This may be considered a sequel to *Letter* 147. Augustine wrote it to remind Fortunatian to ask his (Augustine's) pardon of an unnamed bishop for any offense given by any words he used in a letter (*Letter* 147) concerning the vision of God. He then proceeds to make clear his view: God can be seen here on earth only in an invisible or spiritual way. In confirmation of this view, in addition to Holy Scripture, he cites Ambrose, Jerome, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nazianzus. He admits that he is at a loss to explain clearly how, after the resurrection, the human body will become spiritual (cf. *Letter* 148, FC 20.224-238), though he is certain it will rise again and be immortal and incorruptible.

Next, in a sermon, *Sermon* 277, *ca.* 413, he discussed the same themes: the nature of the glorified body and the question of seeing God with bodily eyes. About 414, he wrote a letter to Evodius, *Letter* 162, in response to the latter's questions on apparitions, visions and the like. His words: "You ask many questions of a very busy man" (FC 20.374), indicate the intimacy and freedom of their relations. Though Augustine

refers Evodius to other works of his for the answers, he briefly discusses and explains the question of seeing God. Last, he discusses the question of the spiritual body, "adequately" in his eyes (cf. *Retractations, supra*), in his important apologetical work *On the City of God* (cf. *Retractations* 2.69; *On the City of God* 22.29).

In the letters and sermons mentioned above, Augustine treats the subjects of the vision of God and the spiritual body in practically the same way, though he discusses this topic with less rigidity in his later correspondence than in his earliest letter, *Letter* 92. In all these writings, however, there is the same hesitancy or indecision regarding a satisfactory clarification of this profound subject.

Chapter 68

ONE BOOK ON NATURE AND GRACE

(De natura et gratia liber unus)

At that time, there came into my hands a certain book of Pelagius in which he defends, by as strong argumentation as possible, the nature of man as opposed to the grace of God by which the wicked man is justified[1] and we are Christians. The book, then, in which I replied to him and defend grace, not as opposed to nature, but as that through which nature is liberated and controlled, I entitled *On Nature and Grace*.

In this book, certain words which Pelagius quoted as those of Xystus (Sixtus), Roman bishop and martyr, I defended as though they were really those of this Xystus;[2] for I had thought this. But I read later that they are the words of Sextus, the philosopher, and not of Xystus, the Christian.[3]

1 Cf. Rom. 4.5.

2 Cf. *On Nature and Grace* 64.77; also Jerome, *Letter* 133; *On Jeremiah* 22 and *On Ezekiel* 18.

3 Cf. W. Oates, *Basic Writings* 1.573 n. 184.

This book begins as follows: "The book which you sent."

NOTE. The treatise, *On Nature and Grace*, written in 415 and addressed to two young men, Timasius and James, is a refutation of a work of the heretic, Pelagius, *On Nature (De natura)*, which was sent to Augustine by these two, who, at the urging of Pelagius, had devoted themselves to the service of God. Later, disturbed by the arguments of Pelagius, they forwarded Pelagius' *On Nature* to Augustine and earnestly requested that he reply to it (cf. *Letter* 177 from Augustine, Aurelius, Alypius, Evodius, and Possidius to Pope Innocent I, *ca.* 416; *Letter* 179, *ca.* 416, from Augustine to Bishop John of Jerusalem in which the attendant circumstances of this treatise are mentioned and the arguments of Pelagius against the grace of God are summarized; *On Nature and Grace* 1.1; NPN 5.117 note). When Augustine sent the first of these letters (*Letter* 177) to Pope Innocent I, he also sent him copies of Pelagius' *On Nature* and the request of Timasius and James and his reply to it, the present treatise, *On Nature and Grace* (cf. *Letter* 177, FC 30.98-99; *On Nature and Grace* 1.1).

At the beginning of this treatise, Augustine states that the work of Pelagius, *On Nature*, was written by a man too ardently opposed to those who, instead of censuring human will as they ought, accuse human nature (cf. *On Nature and Grace* 1.1). He refrains from mentioning the name of Pelagius for some time (cf. *ibid* 7.7) with the hope that this consideration will result in Pelagius' recognition of his own error.

The basic errors of the Pelagians were their doctrine that the will is completely self-sufficient and, therefore, not dependent on God—a denial of the necessity of God's grace for salvation—and the assertion that sinlessness in man is possible. Pelagius considered nature and grace identical; Augustine maintained that grace is not nature, but rather that by which nature is served and helped (cf. *Letter* 177, FC 30.99; *On Heresies* 88).

In brief, in this treatise, Augustine disclosed the false teachings of Pelagius and vigorously attacked them (cf. *On Nature and Grace* 7.7-10.11; 19.21), especially his doctrine of the self-sufficiency of the will and its unrestricted power to do good or evil (cf. *ibid.* 35.40-41), and the Pelagian contention that it is possible for a man to be sinless (cf. *ibid.* 44.51f.). He affirmed that God's gifts in nature have been made weak by sin and that only through His grace can they be restored (cf., for example, *ibid.* 11.12).

Subsequently, Timasius and James wrote to Augustine to express their gratitude for his answers, which they highly praised, and to thank him for enabling them to rid themselves

of their error (cf. *Letter* 168). In a letter of Augustine, addressed to Bishop John of Jerusalem, the writer praises Timasius and James, and again discusses Pelagius' work, *On Nature* (cf. *Letter* 179; cf. *supra*). In another letter from Augustine and Alypius to Bishop Paulinus of Nola (*Letter* 186), Augustine repeats his refutation of the false views of Pelagius.

To the end of his life, Augustine held to the views expressed in this treatise. In one place, he states them concisely: "God does not, then, order impossibilities; but when He orders, He advises you to do what is possible and to ask His help to accomplish what is not possible" (*On Nature and Grace* 43.50).

Chapter 69

TWENTY-TWO BOOKS ON THE CITY OF GOD

(De civitate Dei libri viginti duo)

(1) Meanwhile, Rome was destroyed as a result of an invasion of the Goths under the leadership of King Alaric, and of the violence of this great disaster. The worshipers of many false gods, whom we call by the customary name pagans, attempting to attribute its destruction to the Christian religion, began to blaspheme the true God more sharply and bitterly than usual. And so, "burning with zeal for the house of God,"[1] I decided to write the books, *On the City of God*, in opposition to their blasphemies and errors. This work kept me busy for some years because many other things, which should not be deferred, interfered and their solution had first claim on me. But finally, this extensive work, *On the City of God*, was completed in twenty-two books.

The first five of these books refute those persons who would so view the prosperity of human affairs that they think that the worship of the many gods whom the pagans worship is necessary for this; they contend that these evils arise and abound because they are prohibited from doing so. The next

1 Cf. Ps. 68.10; John 2.17.

five books, however, speak against those who admit that these evils have never been wanting and never will be wanting to mortals, and that these, at one time great, at another time slight, vary according to places, times, and persons; and yet they argue that the worship of many gods, whereby sacrifice is offered to them, is useful because of the life to come after death. In these ten books, then, these two false beliefs, contrary to the Christian religion, are refuted.

(2) But lest anyone charge that we have only argued against the beliefs of others, and have not stated our own, it is just this that the second part of this work, which consists of twelve books, accomplishes; although, when there is need, both in the first ten books I state my own opinions, and, in the last twelve, I argue against those opposed to them. The first four of the following twelve books, then, deal with the origin of the two cities, one of which is of God, the other of this world; the next four books treat of their growth or progress; but the third four books, which are also the last, deal with their destined ends. And so, although the entire twenty-two books were written about both cities, yet, they have taken their title from the better one, and consequently are called, *On the City of God.*

In the tenth of these books, the following should not have been cited as a miracle: "during the sacrifice of Abraham, a fire enkindled in heaven ran between the separated victims,"[2] for this was shown to him in a vision. What was said about Samuel in the seventeenth book, namely, that he "was not a son of Aaron,"[3] should preferably be stated as follows: "He was not the son of a priest." For the customary law was rather that sons of priests succeed deceased priests; for the father of Samuel is found among the sons of Aaron, but he was not a priest nor among Aaron's sons in the sense that

2 Cf. *On the City of God* 10.8; Gen. 15.17.

3 Cf. *On the City of God* 17.5: "We cannot say that this prophecy . . . was fulfilled in Samuel . . . yet he was not of the sons of Aaron." Cf. *Retr.* 2.81.2.

Aaron had begotten him, but in the sense that all his people are called sons of Israel.

This work begins as follows: "The most glorious city of God."

NOTE. Augustine intermittently wrote and released his great work, *On the City of God,* between 413 and 426 (cf. *Retractations, supra; On the City of God* 5.26, 18.1; *Letter* 184A, 417 A.D., to Peter and Abraham; Orosius, *Seven Books of History against the Pagans,* a work considered a supplement to *On the City of God*—cf. the introduction, xviii-xix, to the trans. of this work by R. J. Deferrari, FC 50).

About a year or more after he completed this monumental work, he restated his purpose in writing it: impelled by a burning zeal for his Father's house, he decided to write on the city of God in opposition to the blasphemies and errors of the pagans who attributed to the Christian religion the destruction of Rome in 410 by the invading Goths under Alaric (cf. *Retractations, supra).*

References to this purpose or plan are found here and there in passages throughout the present work. Certain of these deserve special mention: Book 1.35 and 36 contain a summary of this plan; here, there is no essential difference between this statement of plan and that made in the *Retractations* years later, and only a slight difference between it and that found in Book 10.32, where, however, Augustine is more specific about the topics treated in individual books. Book 18.1, though largely repetitious, contains additional information about the last twelve books, namely, Books 11-22, and here there is, too, a specific mention of Book 16 (cf. R. J. Deferrari and S. M. Jerome Keeler, "St. Augustine's *City of God:* Its Plan and Development," *American Journal of Philology* 50 [1929] 109-137, for a discussion of Augustine's plan as given in the *Retractations,* how he carried it out, and the digressions, repetitions, and unnecessary explanations "that might be thought to mar the plan").

A series of letters exchanged between Augustine and two correspondents, Volusian (a Roman official in Africa) and Marcellinus, during the year 412, form the background for *On the City of God* and reveal Augustine's thinking on the main themes in this work prior to his writing the first book. The first two of these, *Letter* 132 (Augustine to Volusian) and *Letter* 135 (Volusian to Augustine), initiate these communications. Certain passages in others that are relevant to the main themes of *On the City of God* are found in *Letter* 136 from Marcellinus to Augustine and *Letters* 137 and 138 addressed

by Augustine to Marcellinus. In regard to Augustine's attempts to solve Volusian's difficulties concerned with the Incarnation, V. Bourke remarks that Augustine began the discussion of a broader subject, "that of the need of a truly religious foundation for the life of a state." He then adds: "One sentence strikes the keynote of Augustine's attitude and foreshadows the theme of the *City of God* [this is a quotation from *Letter* 137]: 'In this does the salvation of a praiseworthy state consist: . . . then men truly love each other.' . . . But, though the correspondence with Volusianus and Marcellinus supplied the immediate and personal motivations for the composition of the *City of God,* it is quite clear that contemporary world events constituted the general stimulus" (cf. V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 181; also *Letter* 137).

The passages referred to above are quoted in full and commented on in the Introduction (lix-lxvii) to the translation of *On the City of God* by George E. McCracken (cf. *St. Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans,* Books I-III, trans. by George E. McCracken, Loeb Classical Library, 1957). This translator's discussion ends with the words: "Here in these quotations which have been transcribed at length because they strikingly show the thinking of Augustine as he was about to begin the composition of *The City of God,* we find the very obvious seeds from which the great work emerged. It was begun to provide an answer to the problem of the pagan group which centered round Volusian. Though this correspondence has usually been mentioned by previous writers, the letters in it have not perhaps received their just due as important aids to the study of Augustine's purpose in writing his masterpiece" (*ibid.* lxvi-lxvii).

Three other letters pertinent to the theme of this treatise should be mentioned at this point: *Letter* 169 to Evodius, 415 A.D., and *Letter* 184A, 417 A.D., to Peter and Abraham, where Augustine makes specific references to *On the City of God;* an undated letter to Firmus, first printed by C. Lambot in *Revue Bénédictine* 51 (1939), 109-121: "Lettre inédite de S. Augustin relative au *De civitate Dei,*" wherein we find the circumstances under which this work was finished (cf. the commentary and translation of this letter in FC 8, Appendix, 397-401).

Augustine himself indicates the main divisions and subdivisions of his work and briefly summarizes the contents of each (cf. *Retractations, supra*). The first ten books are apologetical and polemical in character; the last twelve, speculative, metaphysical, and expository.

The concept of an ideal society or commonwealth and of two cities antedates the composition of *On the City of God.* It is found in the philosophy of the Pythagoreans and in

Plato's *Republic* (cf. 529B) and *Laws* (cf. 713A, 713E). In the latter, however, the society represented is utopian; in Augustine's work the "City of God" is attainable. The idea of the city of God and/or two cities is also found in Stoicism, for example, in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* (cf. 4.23); in Cicero (cf. *De legibus* 1.23); and in Seneca (cf. *De otio* 4.1). The idea of two cities is also found in Posidonius, Plotinus, and Porphyry (cf. George E. McCracken, *op. cit.* lvi-lix; B. Altaner, *op. cit.* 163, etc.); in the *Commentary on the Apocalypse* written by the Donatist Tyconius (cf. *Retractations* 2.30 NOTE; Altaner, *op. cit.* 437-438), whom Christopher Dawson terms as an "Afro-Catholic" (C. Dawson, "The City of God," *St. Augustine: His Age, Life and Thought* [paperback reprint of *A Monument to St. Augustine*] 58 n.1); and in the Old and New Testaments. St. Paul is said to have been the first Christian writer to use this idea (G. McCracken, *op. cit.* lviii).

To what extent Augustine was influenced by these writings cannot be determined. Plato *(Republic)*, Tyconius, and the Bible furnish ample source material, but Augustine was probably influenced more by the Bible and Tyconius than by any other possible source, pagan or Christian.

The idea of two cities appears in other works of St. Augustine, for example, in *On Catechizing the Uninstructed* (19.31 and 21.37); *On Free Choice* (1.5); *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* (11.15 and 12.11); *On the True Religion* (1.25, 1.27, 1.50); *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* (29); in sermons, especially *Discourses on the Psalms (Enarrationes in Psalmos;* cf., for example, those on Psalms 61 and 142).

Augustine conceived two cities: that of the just, the city of God or the celestial city, and that of the wicked, the city of the devil or the earthly city (cf., for example, *On the City of God* 14.1; 14.28; 15.1; 19.17). One passage will illustrate this: "What we see, then, is that two societies have issued from two kinds of love. Worldly society has flowered from a selfish love which dared to despise even God, whereas the communion of saints is rooted in a love of God that is ready to trample on self . . . . The city of man seeks the praise of men, whereas the height of glory for the other is to hear God in the witness of conscience. The one lifts up his head in its own boasting; the other says to God: 'Thou art my glory, Thou liftest up my head' " *(On the City of God* 14.28, FC 14.410).

At the beginning of the eleventh book of *On the City of God,* Augustine enters upon his main theme by explaining and justifying his concept of the two cities: "The expression, 'City of God,' which I have been using is justified by that Scripture whose divine authority puts it above the literature of all other people and brings under its sway every type of human

genius—and that, not by some casual, intellectual reaction, but by a disposition of Divine Providence . . . ." Here, he quotes passages from Holy Scripture in support of his views (cf. *On the City of God* 11.1, FC 14.187).

"Undeniably, Augustine thought that the most adequate historical embodiments of the City of Babylon are to be found in the pagan empires of Assyria and Rome, just as he certainly thought that the City of Jerusalem, the City of God, is manifested in the Church. Nonetheless, the ideas of the heavenly and earthly cities are moral and spiritual ideas, the contents of which are not exactly coterminous with any actual organization. . . ." (F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* II 87).

This monumental work on two cities is considered Augustine's masterpiece and the greatest apologetical work of early Christianity. In it and his work *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* (cf. *Retractations* 2.89), we find Augustine's best eschatological teaching (cf. Cayré, *op. cit.* I 650). In the words of Christopher Dawson: [it was] "written with a definitely controversial aim in response to a particular need. But, during the fourteen years—from 412-426—during which he was engaged upon it, the work developed from a controversial pamphlet into a vast synthesis which embraces the whole human race and its destinies in time and eternity . . . ." (C. Dawson, *op. cit.* 43).

Portalié states: "The *Confessions* are theology as experienced in one soul and the history of God's actions in individuals; *The City of God* is theology as living in the historical framework of humanity and explains the action of God in the world" (cf. Portalié, trans. by Bastian 46).

Chapter 70

ONE BOOK TO OROSIUS THE PRIEST AGAINST THE PRISCILLIANISTS AND ORIGENISTS

(Ad Orosium presbyterum contra Priscilianistas <et Origenistas> liber unus)

Meanwhile,[1] I replied with as much brevity and clarity as

1 That is, during the composition of *On the City of God*.

possible to the inquiry of a certain Orosius, a Spanish priest,[2] concerning the Priscillianists and certain opinions of Origen which the Catholic Church rejects. The title of this work is *To Orosius, against the Priscillianists and the Origenists;*[3] and the inquiry itself was added at the beginning of my reply.

This book begins as follows: "To give an answer to your question, dearly beloved son, Orosius."

NOTE. The present treatise was written, according to Augustine, in reply to an inquiry of the Spanish priest, Orosius, and entitled *To Orosius, against the Priscillianists and Origenists* (cf. *Retractations* 2.70). Its date of composition is 415.

Orosius was born between 380 and 390, probably in Bracara, Gallicia (modern Braga in northern Portugal), though, according to some, his birthplace was Tarraco in Spain. For undetermined reasons (cf. Orosius, *Commonitorium* 1), he left Spain about 413 or 414 and went to Hippo Regius. Some think that the invasion of Spain by the Alans and Vandals at that time was responsible for his departure. We know that the severe disturbances caused in the Church of Spain by the Priscillianist heresy was so great that he felt compelled to be better informed about that sect and that he turned to Augustine for counsel (cf. *ibid.*). Augustine wrote: ". . . Orosius, who came to us from faraway Spain, . . . with the sole incentive of learning of Holy Scriptures" (cf. *Letter* 169, FC 30.61; Orosius, *Histories* 5.2.2, trans. R. J. Deferrari, FC 50.176f.).

Orosius' work, *A Summary [or Reminder] of the Error of the Priscillianists and Origenists (Commonitorium de errore Priscillianistarum et Origenistarum)*; cf. PL 31.1211-1216; CSEL 18.149-157), was written for Augustine. To it, he promptly replied by composing the present treatise, a brief work containing a partial reply, for Augustine had previously written at length in opposition to the Manichaean heresy, whose principles gave rise, in part, to that of the Priscillianists (cf. *Letter* 237, in which Augustine rebukes the Priscillianists for their trickery and condonment of falsehood, and his tribute to Orosius written previously, *Letter* 166).

Augustine advised Orosius to go to Jerome in Jerusalem, "where," Augustine humbly states, "he could learn what I could not give him" (cf. *Letter* 166), and entrusted to him two letters for Jerome (cf. *Letters* 166 and 167; *Retractations*

2 Cf. *Letter* 237 to Ceretius in which Augustine reproves the Priscillianists for their falsifications and their motto: "Give your word, break it, but don't betray the secret" (Portalié, trans. by Bastian, 49-50). Cf. *Letters* 166, 169, and *Retr.* 2.70 NOTE.

3 Here the full title of this treatise is given.

2.71). In Jerusalem, he became involved with Jerome in the Pelagian controversy, which occasioned his writing *Liber apologeticus.* On his way back to Spain, he stopped at Hippo, probably delivered Jerome's letter to Augustine (cf. Jerome, *Letter* 134 in the correspondence of Augustine), and, at Augustine's request, wrote his *Seven Books of Histories against the Pagans,* a supplement, so to speak, to Augustine's *On the City of God,* especially to Book 3 of that masterpiece.

It is thought that the Gnostic and Manichaean doctrines contained in the heresy of Priscillian were brought in the fourth century from Egypt by a certain Mark of Memphis, and that two of his followers, a man and a woman, Agape and Helpidius, converted Priscillian (cf. Smith and Wace, DCB 4.471; ODCC 1107-1108).

Between about 370 and 380, Priscillian organized the sect later named for him. Prior to the editing of part of his writings by G. Schepss in 1889 (CSEL 18), Priscillian was a severely condemned heretic. Since that time, however, a new scrutiny of the man and his teachings has been made.

Apparently, the Priscillianist heresy was an admixture of Gnostic, Manichaean, and other heretical teachings, together with an intermingling of mythology and astrology (cf. the present treatise; *On Heresies* 70 [Müller pp. 110-113, 198-202]; ODCC *loc. cit.).* It was never widespread; outside of Spain, so far as can be ascertained, it was promulgated only in Aquitania. Several councils met to combat it. At the synod held in Saragossa, 380, Priscillian and two of his followers, Bishops Instantius and Salvian, were condemned and excommunicated. The two bishops retaliated by consecrating Priscillian a bishop (cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Historia sacra* 2.47). In 385, after reigning over the See of Avila for five years, Priscillian was charged with magic and immorality *(maleficium)* and, on order of the usurper, Maximus, was executed at Trier (Trèves), together with several of his followers despite the efforts of St. Martin of Tours to save the lives of the condemned. Bishops Instantius and Salvian were sent into exile.

The heresy had before it a full two centuries of life. A creed composed by Bishop Pastor of Palencia in 447 and approved by a synod of Toledo of that year is directed against Priscillianist errors. However, the heresy fell into decline only after a synod of Braga (561) drew up seventeen canons against the Priscillianists. (Cf. K. Bihlmeyer and H. Tüchle, *op. cit.* 262.)

Augustine briefly sums up his present work as follows: "In one small book as briefly and clearly as I could, I gave this same Orosius the answers to several questions on the Priscillian heresy. . ." *(Retractations, supra).*

Orosius consulted Augustine about the Origenist heresy at

the same time he submitted to him his inquiry about Priscillianism. In the present treatise, however, Augustine treats Origenism summarily. As stated above, he recommended to Orosius his books on Manichaeism and referred him to Jerome for further enlightenment of this question (cf. *Letter* 169).

At the time Augustine wrote the present treatise (415), apparently Priscillianism was still a threat to the Church, for he, at the same time, also wrote a letter denouncing it (*Letter* 237, 415 A.D.). Furthermore, in one of his short treatises, *Against Lying (ca.* 420; cf. *Retractations* 2.86), he condemns the Priscillianist justification of falsehood, and briefly, in his work *On Heresies (ca.* 428/429), he again deals with it.

Origen was a man of great learning whose literary output was immense. "It surpasses in volume that of all other writers of antiquity" (cf. B. Altaner, *op. cit.* 225). He was a zealous Christian who wished to be orthodox, but his addiction to allegorical exegesis and the influence of Platonic philosophy led him into grave errors. However, some teachings ascribed to him were rather those developed by later scholars. Hence, a distinction must be made between the teachings of Origen himself and Origenism.

Chapter 71

TWO BOOKS TO THE PRIEST JEROME: ONE ON THE ORIGIN OF THE SOUL AND THE SECOND ON A PASSAGE FROM JAMES

(Ad Hieronymum presbyterum libri duo, unus de origine animae et alius de sententia Iacobi)

I also wrote two books to Jerome, the priest, who was living in Bethlehem—one on the origin of the soul of man,[1] the second on a passage from the Apostle James[2] where he says: "Whoever keeps the whole law, but offends in one point, has become guilty in all."[3] I consulted him about both, but,

1 A letter-treatise, *Letter* 166.
2 A letter-treatise, *Letter* 167; cf. *Retr.* 2.71 Note.
3 Cf. James 2.10.

in that first book, I did not solve the question which I myself proposed. In the second book, however, I was not silent about what seemed to me the best solution of the question, but I also asked whether he agreed with this. He wrote in reply praising this inquiry of mine, and yet he said that it was not possible for him to reply to this.[4] But I did not want to publish these books while he was still alive lest, perhaps, he might reply at some time, and they could be published preferably with his response. After his death, however, I published the first book to warn the reader either not to search at all into the question of how the soul is given to men at birth, or certainly to concede, on a very obscure subject,[5] the present solution of this question which is not contrary to manifest facts, although, with regard to original sin, the Catholic faith knows that, so far as little children are concerned, unless they be regenerated in Christ, without a doubt, they are lost. As for the second book, I published it to make known the solution which seemed best to me of the question which is discussed here.

This book begins as follows: ". . . our God, who has called us."

NOTE. The "two books" mentioned in the title of the work, *Two Books to the Priest Jerome: One on the Origin of the Soul and the Second on a Passage from James* (cf. *Retractations, supra)* are, in fact, two letters, *Letters* 166 and 167 in the Augustinian corpus. Both were written in 415. Augustine took advantage of an opportunity to send these letters to Jerome by a trustworthy messenger, Orosius, when the latter was preparing to go to Jerusalem to consult Jerome, a visit suggested and encouraged by Augustine as we learn from the

4 The above translation is as close to apposite sense as can be had from the text given by Knöll, who, according to arguments advanced by Jülicher *(Theologische Literaturzeitung* 28 [1903] 53), ought to have followed all his predecessors in accepting into the sentence the word *otium* ("leisure"). The pre-Knöll reading yields the meaning "said that he had no time to reply." In actual fact, Jerome, in acknowledging Augustine's two "libri" ([Aug.] *Letter* 172.1: FC 30.72), came close to saying this when he wrote, "I have been temporarily unable to reply."

5 Cf. *Retr.* 1.1.3; 1.7.1; 2.82.

first of these communications: "I believe this opportunity has been granted me by the Lord to write you about the subjects on which I wish to be enlightened by you" *(Letter* 166; cf. *Retractations* 2.70 NOTE).

In the first of these letter-treatises, Augustine, after preliminary remarks, introduces a question which had troubled him for many years: "The question of the soul troubles many, among whom I confess I am found" (*Letter* 166). Prior to writing this letter, Augustine had discussed this perplexing question in treatises and letters: *On Free Choice, ca.* 388-395 (3.20.56-3.21.59; cf. *Retractations* 1.8); *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis, ca.* 401-405 (cf. Book 7, and Book 10 where this subject is enlarged upon; cf. *Retractations* 2.50); *Letter* 140, *ca.* 412, a letter-treatise addressed to Honoratus (cf. *Retractations* 2.62); *Letter* 143, 412 A.D., and *Letter* 164, *ca.* 415. In later works and letters, he again discusses the nature and origin of the soul and its transmission: *Letter* 190, 418 A.D.; *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians,* 420 (3.10.26; cf. *Retractations* 2.87); *On the Soul and Its Origin, ca.* 419 (cf. *Retractations* 2.82 with NOTE, where these works are again mentioned); *Against Julian,* 421 (5.4.17); *An Unfinished Work against Julian, ca.* 429/430 (2.178 and 4.104).

The problem of the nature and origin of the soul involved that of the origin of the souls of Adam and Eve and of their progeny. Here in *Letter* 166, Augustine expressed definite convictions on certain points: he denied the Gnostic and Manichaean doctrine of emanation which taught that the soul is a part of God, and asked Jerome to explain his position on the question of the creation by God of separate souls for separate men. Here, too, he again discussed the four opinions about the origin of the soul, but still remained in doubt about the true answer to this question: "But before I knew which one [of these opinions] is to be preferred, I protest that I hold confidently that the one which is true is not opposed to the firm and fundamental faith by which the Church of Christ believes that the children of men just born cannot be delivered from damnation except through the grace of the name of Christ which he has entrusted to us in His sacraments."

He believed in creationism, and in a form of traducianism, but one entirely spiritual, that is, he firmly maintained that the soul of man is spiritual, not corporeal, and that it was created by God. In a letter addressed to Bishop Optatus, Augustine rejects the materialistic traducianism of Tertullian: "For those who claim that souls are begotten from one which God gave to the first man, and who say that they are derived from their parents, if they follow the opinion of Tertullian [cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7, and Augustine, *On the*

Literal Meaning of Genesis 10.25 and 10.26], they certainly hold that such souls are not spirits but bodies, and are produced from corporeal seed—and what more perverted view could be expressed? But it is not surprising that Tertullian was dreaming when he thought this, since he even thought that God the Creator was not spirit but body" (*Letter* 190, 418 A.D. FC 30.279. For an excellent summary of Augustine's views on the soul, cf. F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy* II 79-80; cf. also Portalié, trans. by Bastian, pp. 148-151).

In the second letter sent to Jerome (*Letter* 167), Augustine asks Jerome about the exegesis of a passage from James (2.10): "Whoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is guilty of all." After referring to his question on the origin of the soul treated in the preceding letter and his decision not to load it with another question, Augustine adds: "But the more pressing a difficulty is, the more we are bound not to pass it by. Therefore, I ask and beg you by the Lord to explain for me something which I think will benefit many, or, if you have an explanation done either by you or by somebody else, to send it to me, namely, how we are to understand those words in the Epistle of the Apostle James . . . [Here, Augustine quotes James]. This is a matter of such great importance that I regret profoundly not having written you about it long ago" (*Letter* 167).

Augustine then presents copiously illustrated arguments to explain the difficulty he finds in interpreting the words of the Apostle. He gives his own solution and distinguishes between his manner of presenting the question on the origin of the soul (cf. *Letter* 166) and the problem of understanding the passage from James: "But in this one I said what I thought; whereas, in the other one, on the origin of the soul, I only asked, in a sort of tentative argument, what he thought" (*Letter* 167).

To these two letters, Jerome replied briefly in a communication he may have given to Orosius to deliver to Augustine on his way back to Spain by way of Africa (Jerome, *Letter* 172 in the corpus of Augustine's letters, 416; cf. also *Retractations* 2.70 NOTE). In this letter, Jerome makes no attempt to answer Augustine's questions. Instead, he eulogizes Augustine and praises his two "books" [*Letters* 166 and 167]: "Certainly, you have set forth and discussed with your profound mind all that can be said, drawing from the fount of Sacred Scripture." He then turns to other topics, among them the Pelagian heretics, mentioning first his own work against them (*Liber adversus Pelagianos*) and then exhorting Augustine to join with him in driving "this baneful heresy from the Churches" (*Letter* 172).

Chapter 72

ONE BOOK TO EMERITUS, BISHOP OF THE DONATISTS, AFTER THE CONFERENCE

(Ad Emeritum episcopum Donatistarum post conlationem liber unus)

To Emeritus, bishop of the Donatists, who, during the conference we held with them, seemed especially to plead their cause, a short time after this conference I addressed a book, quite useful, for with suitable brevity it explains the arguments through which the Donatists can be conquered or are proved to have been conquered.[1]

This book begins as follows: "If even now, brother Emeritus."

NOTE. Unfortunately, the treatise, *To Emeritus, Bishop of the Donatists, after the Conference,* the first work of Augustine directed against Emeritus, Donatist Bishop of Caesarea in Mauretania, is not extant. Augustine tells us in his *Retractations (supra)* that he wrote this work "some time after the Conference," that is, after the momentous Conference of Carthage held in 411. From this statement and from its position in the *Retractations,* where it immediately follows a work written in 415, we conclude that it was composed about 416, the date usually assigned to it.

Nothing further is known of this work except what the author writes in the same passage of the *Retractations,* where he states that it served a quite useful purpose: its arguments, he says, could be used either to vanquish the Donatists or to show that they had been vanquished. Apparently, Augustine was satisfied with this work because, when he reconsidered it, he did not correct or emend it.

Prior to the Conference of Carthage, nothing is known of Emeritus, to whom Possidius later refers as one whom "the members of his sect regarded as their chief defender" (*Vita Augustini* 14), except the information found in a letter of

1 This work is not extant.

Augustine to Emeritus written between the years 405/406 and 411. In this communication (*Letter* 87), Augustine expresses surprise at the fact that a man of Emeritus' ability, who he heard was "endowed with a good mind and trained in the liberal studies" should entertain opinions at variance with the truth. "Why, then," writes Augustine, "have you, by a rash and accursed schism, cut yourselves off from communion with innumerable Eastern Churches which knew nothing of what happened in Africa according to what you teach or pretend?" To the untruths of the Donatists, Augustine then opposes the truth. He concludes this letter with the words: "Cease, then, to magnify the deeds of men, either heard or known, into general statements, for you see that I pass over your deeds, so as to argue the case about the origin of the schism, which is the heart of the whole question. May the Lord God breathe peaceful thoughts into you, beloved and desired brother. Amen." There is no evidence that this letter was answered.

Emeritus was one of the seven representatives or spokesmen for the Donatists at the Conference of Carthage (cf. *Gesta Collationis,* PL 11.1223-1420). Some years later, 418, Augustine was sent to Caesarea on a mission for Pope Zosimus. While there, he met Emeritus and invited him to accompany him to the Catholic church. To this Emeritus agreed. There Augustine, on September 18, 418, delivered a well-attended sermon, which is extant and has come down to us under the title, *A Sermon to the People of Caesarea Delivered in the Presence of Emeritus (Sermo ad Caesariensis ecclesiae plebem praesente Emerito habitus,* PL 43.689-698). Emeritus tersely replied to a few of Augustine's questions at the beginning of this church meeting, but later he refused to accept Augustine's verbal challenges despite the plea of his relatives and friends (cf. Possidius, *Vita Augustini* 14).

In his sermon, Augustine again reviewed what transpired at the Conference of Carthage and ended with a plea for unity. He took up the cry of the congregation: "Here or nowhere," and added: "I pray it may be here" (cf. *Sermon cit.* 1). Despite Augustine's efforts and the expressed desire of the congregation, Emeritus remained silent and obdurate. Presently, we shall deal with a work, *Proceedings with Emeritus the Donatist* (cf. *Retractations* 2.77), written shortly after this *Sermon,* and here Augustine again makes a strong plea for unity.

Chapter 73

ONE BOOK ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF PELAGIUS

(*De gestis Pelagi liber unus*)

At the same time in the East, that is, in Palestinian Syria,[1] Pelagius was brought before an assembly of bishops by certain Catholic brethren. In the absence of those who had presented the accusation against him[2]—for they could not be present on the day of the synod—he was heard by fourteen bishops.[3] During this synod, they declared him a Catholic on his condemnation of the very teachings, opposed to the grace of Christ, which were read from the indictment against him. But when these proceedings came into our hands, I wrote a book on them in order that, as if he had been exonerated, it would not be thought that in fact the judges approved these very teachings. If he had not condemned them, he, without a doubt, would not have avoided condemnation.

This book begins as follows: "After . . . into our hands."

NOTE. In the *Retractations (supra)*, Augustine states that the treatise, *On the Proceedings of Pelagius*, was written during the same period as the non-extant, anti-Donatist work which it follows, namely, *To Emeritus, Bishop of the Donatists, after the Conference* (cf. *Retractations* 2.72). The latter comes immediately after a work dealing with the origin of the soul and a passage from James (2.10) which is a combination of two letters of Augustine, *Letters* 166 and 167 (cf. *Retractations* 2.71 NOTE). From this evidence and other letters of Augustine (v. *infra*), it is generally assumed that this work was written either in the latter part of 417 or the early part of 418.

Two letters in this group—*Letter* 175 sent to Pope Innocent I by sixty-eight bishops present at the Council of Carthage

1 Diospolis or Lydda in Palaestina. Cf. F. Van der Meer, C. Mohrmann, *Atlas of the Early Christian World* 191; *ibid., Index* 4, 5, 11, *et cetera*.

2 The Synod of Diospolis was held in 415.

3 Cf. *Against Julian* 1.5.19, 1.7.32; *An Unfinished Work against Julian* 2.66; *Letter* 186.

(not signed by Augustine, but presumably drafted by him); *Letter* 179 addressed to John, Bishop of Jerusalem (386-417), containing, among other interesting matters, a discussion of the views of Pelagius and Augustine's request that the minutes of the synod held at Diospolis be sent to him—show that, at the time they were composed (416), the writers were not acquainted with the minutes or *gesta* of Pelagius, the subject of the present treatise. Another letter, however, written about the middle of 417 and addressed to Paulinus of Nola by Augustine and Alypius, makes it clear that, at this time, the requested proceedings were in Augustine's hands (cf. *Letter* 186).

At the beginning of the present treatise, Augustine tells Bishop Aurelius, to whom he addressed this work, that he has in his possession the ecclesiastical proceedings whereby fourteen bishops of the province of Palestine declared Pelagius in communion with the Church, and that, consequently, he is no longer hesitant about dealing with matters that had actually taken place. Therefore, he continues, those who read this work will be in a position to judge both the defense of Pelagius and his treatment of it (cf. *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* 1.1).

This treatise is a detailed examination and an evaluation of the Proceedings of the Council convoked by Bishop John of Jerusalem at Diospolis (Lydda, 415). During it, Bishop John defended Pelagius against the denunciations of Paul Orosius whom Augustine sent to Palestine to check the errors of Pelagius. Doubtless, Pelagius had deceived Bishop John by his protestations of innocence and his abjuration of the heresy of which he was guilty. In one of his letters, St. Jerome calls this Council a "miserable synod" (cf. Jerome, *Letter* 143; cf. also K. Bihlmeyer and H. Tüchle, *op. cit.* 284).

Augustine states that he wrote this work so that the judges who exonerated Pelagius would not be held to approve his teachings, for, he adds, they would not have exonerated him if he had not condemned his own doctrines (cf. *Retractations, supra).*

The first chapters of this treatise are devoted to a detailed investigation of and a commentary on the proceedings or *gesta,* the errors of which Pelagius was accused, his adroit answers to each accusation, and the decisions of the Council. Augustine interweaves this discussion with an examination of Bishop John's procedure during the Council and excuses the bishop's remarks about the accusers of Pelagius, Heros of Arles and Lazarus of Aix (who, unfortunately, were not present), and of Paul Orosius, who faced Pelagius with accusations (cf. *On the Proceedings of Pelagius* 1-40). He defends the judges who declared Pelagius innocent by saying they acted without

discretion (*ibid.* 41); examines Article twelve, which deals with Pelagius' condemnation of Celestius' statements (42); discusses Pelagius' answer and his profession of faith (43) and his acquittal (44); states his suspicion of the vindication of Pelagius because it was not proved (45), and then turns back to his first acquaintance with Pelagius, springing from Pelagius' visit to Hippo during his absence (cf. *Retractations* 2.59 NOTE) and his own opposition to this heresy in books and discussions (46). He mentions his work, *On Nature and Grace* (cf. *Retractations* 2.68), and the letter from Timasius and James who sent to him the *De natura* of Pelagius *(ibid.* 46), contrasts these young men with Pelagius (47-49), justifies the use of the name of Pelagius in this work (50), mentions his own letter to Pelagius (51-52) and Pelagius' misuse of it, and a letter of Pelagius in which he boasts of his acquittal (53-54), comments on the letter in question (55), and, last, questions Pelagius' sincerity and his deception relative to the *Proceedings* in his letter to Augustine (56-57). Augustine makes it clear that Pelagius himself was declared innocent, but that his heresy was condemned (59-60). A history of the Pelagian heresy follows (61-63), together with an explanation of the bishops' exoneration of the heresiarch (64). This treatise ends with an account of the cruel treatment of St. Jerome's monks and nuns by followers of Pelagius (66).

This work, then, is a detailed examination and evaluation of the proceedings of a council that dealt with a heresy which threatened the Church for more than a century, by one experienced in refuting current heresies. It has preserved for posterity, not only the *gesta* of the Council of Diospolis and an explanation and criticism of them and of the action of the judges and other important participants, but also Augustine's condensed history of the heresy of Pelagius and first-hand information about the clever adroitness of the heresiarch which resulted in his unjustifiable exoneration. Hence the importance of this work in the history of the heresies of the early Christian Church (cf. *On Heresies* 88 [Müller pp. 122-125, 210-216]).

Chapter 74

ONE BOOK ON THE COERCION OF THE DONATISTS

(*De correctione Donatistarum liber unus*)

At the same time, I also wrote a book, *On the Coercion of the Donatists*,[1] because of those who did not want them coerced in accordance with the imperial laws.

This book begins as follows: "I praise, I congratulate, I admire."

NOTE. The letter-treatise, *On the Coercion of the Donatists*, is *Letter* 185. It was written in "about the same period" as the work which immediately precedes it in the *Retractations*, *On the Proceedings of Pelagius*, that is, about 417. It was intended for those who opposed the enforcement of the imperial laws issued against the Donatists (cf. *Retractations*, *supra*) and is one of three letters addressed to "Boniface, tribune and count in Africa" (cf. *Letter* 185), who, according to Augustine, was a tribune or civil administrator and later a count or military commander (cf. *Letter* 220). The first of the other two letters, *Letter* 189, was written about 418; the second, *Letter* 220, in 427. This second letter reveals Boniface as a complex and apparently contradictory character who desired at one time to practice virtue to a high degree, but, according to reports received by Augustine, later fell far short of that goal, a lapse which he subsequently regretted (cf. *Letter* 220). When he met with treachery at the hands of his rival, Aetius, and, as a result, fell into disgrace, he, in 429, invited to Africa the Vandals against whom he had previously fought. During their siege of Hippo Regius, it will be recalled, Augustine died. Later, Boniface fought against these same invaders. In 432, he was slain during a battle in Italy by his enemy, Aetius.

The present work, *Letter* 185, is one of several letters of St. Augustine in which he defends the action taken against the Donatists in enforcing the imperial edicts (cf. *Letters* 86, 87, 89, 93, 97, 100, 105, 133, 134, 173, 204, written between about 405/406 and 420). If it is the most important of these letters, as some think, then, undoubtedly, *Letter* 93, addressed to

1 A letter-treatise, *Letter* 185 (cf. *Retr.* 2.74 NOTE) addressed to the Tribune, Boniface.

Vincent the Rogatist (*ca.* 408) in reply to a lost letter (which Augustine feels reasonably sure was written by Vincent) holds second place (cf. *Letter* 93). *Letter* 185, then, may be considered a sequel to *Letter* 93, which also contains Augustine's defensive views on the use of the imperial laws against heretics and schismatics, and the history of the Donatist schism.

The title given to this letter-treatise by Augustine, *On the Coercion of the Donatists,* and his statement of its purpose (cf. *Retractations, supra)* indicate that in it he deals primarily with the question of the enforcement by Church and civil authorities of edicts issued against the Donatists.

At the beginning of this remarkable document, Augustine distinguishes between the heretical Arians and the schismatic Donatists, apparently in answer to a question asked by Boniface in a letter which is not extant (cf. *Letter* 185). He recounts the origin of the Donatist schism, discusses its character, and refers to the Conference at Carthage. He then begins a résumé and defense of his views on the enforcement of the laws in the case of recalcitrant Donatists, the central theme of this letter. "Thus partly," he says, "by obedience to divine warnings, partly by compliance with the imperial decrees, all will be called to salvation . . . . Therefore, whoever refuses to obey the imperial laws which are passed for the protection of God's truth incurs grave punishment." He refutes the Donatist charges of persecution and their claims of martyrdom. As elsewhere, he advocates moderation and gentleness, when possible, in dealing with these schismatics while admitting the necessity for fear in many cases, and ends this letter-treatise with a discussion of the sin against the Holy Spirit.

This writing is rightly considered important because it contains in complete form the views of Augustine and a defense of them on the subject of the enactment of decrees passed by the State to repress the Donatists and end their separation from the Church. The fact that it contains Augustine's summary of these opinions long after the Donatists' cause was lost—that is, after the famous Conference of Carthage which led to the return of many bishops, priests, and laymen to the Church—adds to the historical importance of this work. The continued resistance of some Donatists to both religious and civil authorities, however, was still a threat to both the religious and social life of the times. Hence, the need for further opposition to these obdurate schismatics who continued to resist authority, "men who are firmly set in schism and division," as Augustine himself declares (*Letter* 185A, FC 30.190).

Augustine ends this present letter-treatise as follows: "I have addressed you a lengthy book; perhaps it will be tiresome to

you in the midst of your duties. But, if even parts of it can be read to you, the Lord will give you understanding so that you may know what to answer them for their amendment and cure. For Mother Church entrusts them to you as to her faithful son, so that, when and as you are able, you may amend and cure them, whether by speaking to them and answering them yourself, or by leading them to the doctors of the Church" (cf. *Letter* 185, FC 30.190).

Augustine, however, could hardly foresee that his appeal to the State to coerce the Donatists, and his support of State interference as a policy in such a case, were to have a baleful influence on the relations of Church and State for many centuries.

Chapter 75

ONE BOOK TO DARDANUS ON THE PRESENCE OF GOD

(De praesentia Dei ad Dardanum liber unus)

I wrote a book, *On the Presence of God*,[1] in which my intention was especially alert to opposition to the Pelagian heresy, although it is not expressly mentioned. In this book, however, there is also a careful, precise discussion of the presence of the nature which we call God, both sovereign and true, and of His temple.

This book begins as follows: "I confess, dearly beloved brother, Dardanus."

NOTE. Augustine's "book" entitled *To Dardanus, on the Presence of God*, is a letter, *Letter* 187. It was written in 417, in reply to questions proposed some time previously by Dardanus, praetorian prefect of Gaul. In his *Retractations (supra)*, Augustine states that he wrote it to guard against the Pelagian heresy. It is not usually listed among Augustine's anti-Pelagian works, presumably because it is in letter form.

The first two of the forty-one chapters of this letter-treatise contain an apology for and explanation of the author's delay in

1 This is *Letter* 187; cf. *Retr.* 2.75 NOTE.

answering Dardanus' questions, and an expression of his esteem and affection for Dardanus, to whom he refers as one with a mind "accustomed to probing into profound truths" (*Letter* 187.1-2).

In the third chapter of this letter, Augustine remarks that the question of Dardanus is concerned with the way in which "the man, Christ Jesus, Mediator of God and men" [Tim. 2.5], is now believed to be in heaven (cf. *Letter* 187.3). Dardanus was unable to understand from the words of Christ to the good thief: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise" [Luke 23.43], whether paradise is situated in some part of heaven, or whether, because of God's omnipresence—"the man also who is in God is present everywhere"—how the good thief could be with God in paradise.

This discussion of the good thief is but a prelude, so to speak, to the main discussion of the work, namely, the presence of God in the universe and in man. Augustine admits that it is difficult to determine whether or not paradise may have reference to Abraham's bosom. He concludes (sect. 10) that wherever paradise may be, whoever is blessed is there with God who is everywhere. He explains that in Christ there are two natures, human and divine, and that Christ's humanity joined to His divinity, is not present everywhere, as is His divinity. "God and man in Him are one Person," he writes, "and both are the one Jesus Christ who is everywhere as God, but in heaven as man" (*ibid.*). All created beings are dependent for existence on space or locality, but this is not true of the divine Being, whose ubiquitous diffusion is not limited (*ibid.* 18). An interesting discussion on the diversities of graces bestowed on individual men follows this point.

In chap. 22, Augustine deals with a question which he says Dardanus added to his communication after his signature: How could John leap for joy in his mother's womb when the Mother of God entered? Augustine concludes that this occurrence was a miracle. In the concluding chapters, Augustine discusses the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in baptized children and in individual souls separately and corporately, in just souls united into one body by this indwelling, and in His temples, that is, in men who have become temples by sanctification (cf. *ibid.* 32f.). "Therefore," says Augustine, "God dwells in each one singly as in His temples, and in all of them gathered together as in His temple" (*ibid.* 38). Augustine concludes this work with advice to men on how they are to think of God everywhere and wholly present, and not distributed in different places. This is to be done, he states, by removing corporeal images from their minds (*ibid.* 41).

This letter-treatise is among Augustine's major theological

treatises. Written during the most mature period of his intellectual development, it treats in depth the abstruse doctrine of the omnipresence of God. Moreover, in it Augustine endeavors to clarify this doctrine by explaining it with great care and exactitude (cf. *Retractations, supra)* in order to help the mind of man, despite its limitations, to grasp a truth whose exposition is difficult because of the inadequacy of words to express it. The result is an excellent presentation of the doctrine of God's presence.

The degree to which Augustine succeeded in this endeavor to explain the doctrine of God's presence can be measured by the influence it has had in succeeding ages. It supplements Augustine's discussion of this doctrine in his *Sermons,* in his *Discourses on the Psalms (Enarrationes in Psalmos),* in his *Confessions,* and in other works (cf. S. Grabowski, *The All-Present God,* especially 108-111, 122-123, 126f., 132-134f.).

Chapter 76

TWO BOOKS AGAINST PELAGIUS AND CAELESTIUS TO ALBINA, PINIAN, AND MELANIA, ON THE GRACE OF CHRIST AND ORIGINAL SIN

(Contra Pelagium et Caelestium de gratia Christi et de peccato originali ad Albinam, Pinianum et Melaniam libri duo)

After the Pelagian heresy[1] and its originators were convicted and condemned by the bishops of the Church of Rome, first, by Innocent, then, by Zosimus,[2] with the help of the writings of the councils of Africa, I wrote two books against them [the Pelagians], one on the grace of Christ, the other on original sin.[3]

This work begins as follows: "How greatly we rejoice in your bodily, and especially in your spiritual, welfare."

1 Cf. *On Heresies* 88.
2 Cf. *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin* 1.30.32; 2.17.18; 2.17.19; 2.22.25; 2.24.28.
3 Cf. *Letters* 124 and 126.

NOTE. This important anti-Pelagian treatise, *Two Books against Pelagius and Caelestius to Albina, Pinian, and Melania, on the Grace of Christ and Original Sin,* was composed in 418, the year in which the Plenary Council of Carthage convened and Pope Zosimus issued his memorable *Epistola tractoria,* of which we possess fragments (cf. PL 20.693-695: *Fragmenta* 1, 2, 3; *Letter* 190). In this famous encyclical, the pontiff reversed his earlier decision and confirmed the action of the African Council by condemning Pelagianism, the heresiarch Pelagius, and his zealous follower, Caelestius, the propagandist of his views (cf. *Retractations* 2.59 NOTE). In the same year, before the issuance of this encyclical, the Emperor Honorius had declared Pelagius' doctrine impious and had denied admission to Rome to him and Caelestius. This action on the part of the Holy See and the civil authority caused the decline of Pelagianism and hastened its eventual disappearance, but the battle against it was by no means at an end (cf. *Retractations* 2.59; 2.62; 2.63; 2.68; 2.73 NOTES), as Augustine's continued opposition to it proves.

Augustine addressed the present work to three of his friends, Albina, Melania, and Pinian, who had consulted him and whose request for information he could not deny despite the fact that, at the time it was made, he was hard pressed because of his many activities (cf. this treatise 1.1). Albina was the mother of the younger Melania, the second of the three addressees; she was the granddaughter of the elder Melania and the wife of Pinian (cf. *Letters* 94 and 124), with whom she fled to Africa from Rome in 410. At a later date, Melania and Pinian made a vow of chastity. Eventually, Melania became a religious and Pinian a monk.

Augustine wrote this work after the teachings of the heresiarch Pelagius and his follower, Caelestius, were condemned at Rome and in Africa. In the first book, *On the Grace of Christ,* Augustine brings to light Pelagius' identification of grace with free choice of the will and his absolute rejection of the aid given to the will by grace. To these views, Augustine opposes his position on the doctrine of grace. In the second book, *On Original Sin,* he reviews Pelagius' teachings on original sin and, in opposition to them, argues that original sin exists in all men, including infants.

Augustine's position on grace and original sin is stated more clearly in this treatise than elsewhere in his writings, according to a generally accepted opinion. Here, his clear treatment of these important doctrines is in striking contrast to Pelagius' vaguely and ambiguously expressed denial of the necessity of grace and the existence of original sin. Toward the end of the first book, the author, by stating the salient points of disagree-

ment between Pelagian and orthodox doctrine and offering a solution of them, endeavors to show how the Pelagian controversy could be resolved (cf. this treatise 1.52).

Chapter 77

ONE BOOK, PROCEEDINGS [OF THE CONFERENCE] WITH EMERITUS THE DONATIST

(Gesta cum Emerito Donatista, liber unus)

Some time after the conference which we held with the heretical Donatists, I was obliged to go to Caesarea in Mauretania. There, in this same Caesarea, we saw Emeritus, bishop of the Donatists,[1] one of those seven, no doubt, whom they had selected for the defense of their cause and who had worked very hard in its behalf. Ecclesiastical proceedings which are numbered among my works record what we discussed with him in the presence of the bishops of this same province and the people of the Church at Caesarea. In this city, he was both a citizen and a bishop of the aforesaid heretics. When he could not find anything to say in reply, he listened as though mute to an entire discourse of mine which, in his hearing and in that of all who were present, I developed on the subject of the Maximianists alone.[2] This book or these proceedings begin as follows: "To the most glorious Honorius Augustus, consul for the twelfth time, and Constantius, consul for the second time, most illustrious men, on the twenty-first of September[3] in the basilica at Caesarea."

NOTE. Augustine's work, *Proceedings with Emeritus the Donatist,* written in 418, is a record of the minutes of a public meet-

1 Cf. Possidius, *Vita sancti Augustini* 14; *Letters* 87, 108, 190.
2 Cf. *Sermon to the People of the Church at Caesarea* (*Sermo ad Caesariensis ecclesiae plebem,* CSEL 52).
3 Cf. V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 173; G. Bardy, *Les révisions* 535.

ing between Augustine and Emeritus, held on September 20, 418, at Caesarea in Mauretania.

Seven years after the great Conference of Carthage (cf. *Retractations* 1.19, 2.72 NOTES), Augustine and some fellow bishops were sent to Caesarea by Pope Zosimus "evidently to settle further Church difficulties," according to Possidius (*Vita Augustini* 14). While there, Augustine encountered Emeritus, the one-time prominent Donatist Bishop of Caesarea who was one of the Donatists at the Carthage Conference and was regarded by them as "their chief defender" there (cf. *ibid.; Retractations, supra* and 2.72 NOTE; *Letters* 190-193), but when he and Augustine met at Caesarea, he was practically unknown.

In response to Augustine's invitation, he accompanied him to the major Church of Caesarea, where Augustine delivered the sermon which has come down to us under the title *A Sermon to the People of the Church of Caesarea, Delivered in the Presence of Emeritus (Sermo ad Caesariensis ecclesiae plebem Emerito praesente habitus,* PL 43.689-698). This sermon dealt with the Carthage Conference, peace, and unity. Emeritus was almost entirely silent during it and, at its conclusion, remained unmoved, despite the opportunities given him by Augustine to express himself and the importunities of his relatives and fellow citizens. This one-time "learned, eloquent, and illustrious" man (cf. Possidius, *Vita* 14) refused to admit defeat and to rejoin the Church. Augustine ended his sermon with a plea for unity.

The present work, as mentioned above, is a record of the proceedings or minutes of a meeting held in the same church two days after the delivery of this sermon [cf. *Proceedings with Emeritus (Gesta cum Emerito),* CSEL 53.181-196]. Among the Catholic bishops present besides Augustine, were Alypius of Tagaste, Possidius of Calama, Rusticus of Cartenna, Palladius of Tigabis. Priests, deacons, and a large number of the laity were also in attendance. The Catholic Bishop of Caesarea, Deuterius, presided (cf. *ibid.* 1).

The opening address and most of the discourse was given by Augustine, who then proceeded to speak of his previous unsuccessful meeting with Emeritus (*ibid.*). Augustine reviewed the charges of unfairness brought against the Catholics and Marcellinus during the Conference at Carthage and called upon Emeritus to explain why he had not come back to the Church in the face of the defeat of the Donatist party. Emeritus refused to reply (*ibid.* 2-3). Augustine then summarized the Carthage Conference (*ibid.* 4) and completely reviewed the case of the Maximianists, including Emeritus' part in the Council of Bagai (*ibid.* 8-11).

Toward the end of this work, Augustine makes an eloquent

plea for unity in which he compares the Church to a tree and the schismatics to a broken branch: "With what diligence ought not the tree itself seek the branch broken from it? For this we sweat, for this we labor, for this we have faced the danger of their arms and the bloody fury of the Circumcellions and we continue to endure remnants of all things of every kind with the patience given by God" (*ibid.* 12). He then admits that his long speech has worn him out and that Emeritus, mistaking his cruel fortitude for constancy, remains obstinate. "Let him not continue," he says, "to glory in vain and false fortitude. Let him heed the Apostle when he says, 'Virtue is made perfect in infirmity' [2 Cor. 12.9]. Let us pray for him."

Chapter 78

ONE BOOK AGAINST A SERMON OF THE ARIANS

(Contra sermonem Arrianorum liber unus)

Meanwhile, there came into my hands a certain sermon of the Arians[1] without the author's name. At the request and on the insistence of the person who had sent it to me, I replied as briefly and quickly as I could, attaching this same sermon to the head of my reply and adding numbers topic by topic. By noting these, one can easily turn to my reply on each point.

This book, after the Arian sermon which is attached at the head, begins as follows: "To the foregoing disputation of theirs, I am replying through the following disputation."

NOTE. In his treatise, *Against a Sermon of the Arians* (418 A.D.), Augustine attacks a sermon of the Arians, copies of which were distributed to the faithful in Hippo. The author and the place of composition and the place of the delivery of this sermon are unknown. It contains a summary of the Arian doctrine, as we learn from the document itself which, fortunately, was preserved for posterity by Augustine, who

1 Cf. *On Heresies* 49.

affixed it to his refutation of it, the present treatise. Augustine denies the Arian teaching that the Son is inferior to the Father (cf. *Against a Sermon of the Arians* 42.67, PL 7.684; cf. further *ibid.* 683-708; *On Heresies* 49).

Arianism did not pose a significant problem to the Church in North Africa during most of Augustine's life, for we find refutations of this heresy in only a few of his works, for example, in *Sermons on St. John* and in *On the Trinity* in which he opposed its doctrines by defending the doctrine of the Trinity (cf. *On the Trinity* Books 5, 6, 7; V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 208, 294f.).

After he composed the present treatise, that is, sometime after 426, Augustine corresponded with two Arians, Pascentius and Elpidius: *Letters* 238, 239, and 241 are addressed to Pascentius, an Arian count; *Letter* 240 is from Pascentius to Augustine. None of these letters has a formal address. *Letter* 242 is addressed by Augustine to Elpidius, an Arian, whose relations with him were on a more friendly basis than his association with Pascentius [cf. *Letters* 170 from Alypius and Augustine to Maximus (*ca.* 415), *Letter* 185 to Count Boniface (*ca.* 417), and *Retractations* 2.74 NOTE]. When Augustine denied the Arian doctrines and affirmed the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and his belief in it, Pascentius, in his counter-arguments, denied this doctrine and arrogantly challenged Augustine to defend his faith.

In 427 or 428, Augustine came into contact with a competent Arian adversary, the Arian bishop, Maximin (cf. Smith and Wace, DCB 3.873, "Maximinus" 6). The two bishops, the orthodox and unorthodox, engaged in a debate on faith. Though this disputation was unfinished, Maximin unjustly claimed victory. Augustine, in his *Conference with Maximin of the Arians (Collatio cum Maximino Arianorum,* PL 42.709-742), gives an account of his part in this debate and in *Against Maximin the Heretical Bishop of the Arians (Contra Maximinum haereticum Arianorum episcopum libri duo,* PL 42.743-814), we find his reply to the arguments of Maximin.

Chapter 79

TWO BOOKS ON MARRIAGE AND CONCUPISCENCE, TO VALERIUS

(De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo)

I addressed two books to the illustrious Count Valerius after I had heard that the Pelagians had written something or other to him about us, evidently on the ground that we, by affirming original sin, were condemning marriage. The title of these books is *On Marriage and Concupiscence.*[1] In fact, we defend the good of marriage to prevent the belief that marriage is vitiated by "the concupiscence of the flesh"[2] and "the law in the members warring against the law of the mind."[3] Of this evil of passion conjugal chastity makes a good use for the procreation of children. Moreover, there are two books for the following reason: the first came into the hands of Julian the Pelagian, and he wrote four books in opposition to it.[4] From these, a certain person copied some passages and sent them to Count Valerius who, in turn, sent them to me. After I had received them, I wrote a second book in answer to the passages in question.[5]

The first book of this work begins as follows: "The new heretics, dearly beloved son, Valerius"; the second, on the other hand, thus: "In the midst of the concerns of your military service."

1 Cf. *An Unfinished Work against Julian, Preface (Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum, Praefatio).*
2 Cf. 1 John 2.16.
3 Cf. Rom. 7.23.
4 Cf. Julian, *To Turbantius, Four Books (Ad Turbantium, libri quattuor); Against Julian, Defender of the Pelagian Heresy (Contra Iulianum haeresis pelagianae defensorem); An Unfinished Work against Julian (Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum).*
5 Cf. *Letters* 200 and 207.

NOTE. According to Augustine (cf. *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.5.9), his anti-Pelagian treatise, *On Marriage and Concupiscence,* with which we are presently concerned, was written after the condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius which took place in 418 (cf. *Retractations* 2.59 NOTE). From this evidence and from the position of this work in the *Retractations,* it is generally agreed that it was written about 419-421/422 (cf. *ibid.).* It is the first of four works directed against Julian of Eclanum, the heretical bishop who, with seventeen other Italian bishops, refused to sign the *Epistola tractoria* of Pope Zosimus condemning Pelagianism and its two exponents, Pelagius and Caelestius. As a result, Julian was deposed and exiled *(ibid.;* cf. *Retractations* 2.87 and 2.88 NOTES). Three of these works are treated in the *Retractations:* the present treatise, *On Marriage and Concupiscence, Against Two Letters of the Pelagians (Retractations* 2.87), and *Six Books against Julian (Retractations* 2.88). The fourth work, *An Unfinished Work against Julian,* was written after the *Retractations.*

Augustine addressed the present work to Count Valerius of Africa (cf. *Retractations, supra; On Marriage and Concupiscence* 1.1.1 and 2.1.1; the Preface to *An Unfinished Work against Julian,* PL 45.1049). He sent the first book of *On Marriage and Concupiscence* to Valerius, together with a letter in which he expressed his appreciation for the long-awaited letters of Valerius, commended him for his conjugal chastity, and recommended to him the reading of the accompanying book, at whose beginning, he says, Valerius will find his reasons for composing it and for submitting it to him for consideration (cf. *Letter* 200). When this book came into the hands of Julian, he wrote *Four Books to Turbantius,* a fellow-recusant bishop, in opposition to it (cf. *Retractations, supra;* the Preface to *An Unfinished Work against Julian* [cf. PL 45.1049-1050]; *On Marriage and Concupiscence* 2.2.2). When extracts from Julian's work, sent by Count Valerius, reached Augustine, he wrote the second book of the present treatise in reply. In this book, Augustine expresses regret for confining his answer to extracts from Julian's work and explains that he did so in order not to delay the answer requested by Valerius (cf. *ibid.).* In a treatise written at a later date, *Six Books against Julian (ca.* 421), Augustine refuted the entire work of Julian (cf. *Retractations* 2.88 and the Preface to *An Unfinished Work against Julian*). Julian thereupon wrote *Eight Books to Florus,* a violent attack upon Augustine's treatise. In refutation of these eight books of Julian, Augustine wrote the work that bears the title *An Unfinished Work against Julian.*

His principal reason for writing *On Marriage and Concupiscence* was to refute Julian's calumnious charge that Augus-

tine condemned marriage by affirming original sin (cf. *Retractations, supra*). In another treatise, Augustine asserts that this work is not a condemnation of marriage, but rather a defense of it, and that in it he shows the good of marriage and the evil of concupiscence (cf. *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.5.9; *Retractations* 2.87 NOTE). This treatise, together with two others that deal with marriage, namely, *On the Good of Marriage* (cf. *Retractations* 2.48) and *Two Books on Adulterous Marriages to Pollentius* (cf. *Retractations* 2.83), encompass the theology of marriage from almost all angles. Though, in them, Augustine assigns a higher place to virginity and celibacy than to marriage, a point sometimes attacked by Protestant theologians, yet he stresses the fact that marriage is a good inferior only to these greater goods, and that concupiscence, sanctified by the bond of matrimony, is turned to a good use. This treatise, then, defends the divine institution of marriage and explains its relation to concupiscence (cf. F. Van der Meer, *op. cit.* 189-190).

Chapter 80

SEVEN BOOKS ON EXPRESSIONS

(Locutionum <in heptateuchum> libri septem)

I composed seven books on the seven Books of the Divine Scriptures,[1] that is, on the five Books of Moses, on the one of Josue, and on the one of Judges, noting in each the modes of expressions which are less frequently used in our language. Readers, by giving insufficient attention to these forms of expression when seeking the meaning of the Divine Scriptures, although this is a special mode of expression, sometimes extract a meaning which, indeed, is not inconsistent with the truth, and yet is found not to be the meaning intended by the author; but it seems more credible that he expressed this by employing a special mode of expression.

1 The complete title of this work is: *Seven Books on Expressions in the Heptateuch (Locutiones in Heptateuchum libri septem,* CSEL 28.2).

Accordingly, many obscure passages in the Holy Scriptures become clear only when one understands the mode of expression. For this reason, these very modes of expression must be understood when the ideas are clear, so that even when they are obscure, this knowledge may help and make clear the ideas intended. The title of this work is *Expressions in Genesis* and the other books have similar titles.

Moreover, in the first book, when commenting on the words: "And Noe carried out all the words which the Lord commanded him; and it was so done,"[2] I stated that this mode of expression was similar to that which is used in the account of the creation, where, after the words: "it was so done,"[3] these words are added: "and God made."[4] It does not seem to me that the former phrase is altogether similar to the latter. Thus, in the former, the very meaning is obscure; in the latter, we simply have an "expression."

This book begins thus: "The expressions in the Scriptures."

NOTE. The date usually assigned to this treatise, *On Expressions* (this is the abbreviated form, as given in the *Retractations;* for the full title, see below), is 419, a time determined by its position in the *Retractations,* although some suggest a later date on the ground that, at this time, Augustine was too busily engaged in writing other works—among them his polemics against the Pelagians—to compose it and its companion treatise, *Questions,* which immediately follows it in the *Retractations.* It is true that during this year Augustine was still busily engaged in writing his masterpiece, *On the City of God* (413-426), and other works, namely, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* (419/420; cf. *Retractations* 2.79), *On Adulterous Marriages* (419; cf. *Retractations* 2.83), and *On the Soul and its Origin* (419; cf. *Retractations* 2.82). But that is the pattern of Augustine's literary life. In addition to his letters and sermons, he was in the habit of writing several works simultaneously, as a survey of the dates of composition of his vast

2 Cf. *Expressions in the Heptateuch* 1.18. The Bible passage in question is Gen. 6.22 (cf. 7.5). Here, the sequence of words reported by Augustine appears in one form of the Old Latin version as a reflection of the Septuagint. See *Vetus Latina . . .* 2: Genesis, hrsg. Bonifatius Fischer (Freiburg 1951-4) *loc. cit.* (p. 111f.).

3 Cf. Gen. 1.15 and 1.24.

4 *Ibid.*

literary output will prove. Some of these writings were composed in response to requests he could not refuse. The present work deals with linguistic difficulties in the first seven books of the Bible, the Heptateuch (cf. the full title of this work: *Locutionum <in Heptateuchum> libri septem: Seven Books on Expressions in the Heptateuch,* CSEL 28.1.507 and *Retractations, supra).* In this work, Augustine made a critical study of the unusual terms or phrases, Hebraisms and Hellenisms, found in the Latin translation of the Heptateuch. These modes of expression *(locutiones)* obscured the meaning of the words of Scripture, thus increasing the problems and difficulties of the exegete and of readers in general.

By calling attention to the expressions in the Latin text of the Bible that are not commonly found in the Latin language, Augustine hoped to prevent a wrong interpretation of the "divine words" of Scripture where understanding of the meaning was prevented by a lack of knowledge of the correct signification of idioms or words peculiar to a language other than Latin (cf. *Retractations, supra).* To the explanation of this work in the *Retractations,* he adds an example of his own misinterpretation of two expressions in different sections of the Bible.

Chapter 81

SEVEN BOOKS OF QUESTIONS

(Quaestionum <in heptateuchum> libri septem)

(1) In the same period, I also wrote books on questions pertaining to the same seven Books of Scriptures. I determined to give them this title because I presented the points that are discussed there for investigation rather than for solution, although far more of them seem to me to have been so treated that, not without reason, they can also be considered explained and clarified. In the same way, we had now begun to consider, too, the Books of Kings, but before we had progressed far, our attention was directed to other more urgent things.

Now in the first book, where there is a discussion of the rods of various colors which Jacob put in the water so that the sheep, while conceiving, might see them when they were drinking and bring forth young of various colors,[1] I did not explain satisfactorily why he did not put them there for those conceiving anew, that is, when they were conceiving other young, but only during the first conception.[2] For the explanation of another question,[3] where we sought to know why Jacob said to his father-in-law: "You have also defrauded my wages of ten lambs,"[4] truly satisfactorily explained, shows that the first question was not solved as it should have been.

(2) In the third book, there is also a discussion of how the high priest begot sons,[5] since he had the obligation to enter the Holy of Holies twice a day where the altar of incense was, to offer incense morning and evening,[6] into which, as the law states, he could not enter while unclean, and the law says that a man is even made unclean as a result of conjugal coition,[7] and, indeed, it orders him to be washed with water, but it states also that he, although washed, "is unclean until evening."[8] Hence, I said: "It follows logically that he either be continent or that, on some days, the offering of incense be interrupted." I did not realize that this is not a logical consequence. For what is written: "he will be unclean until evening," can be understood to mean that he was no longer unclean during the evening itself, but up to the evening, so that, cleansed, he could offer incense during the evening even though, after morning offering of incense, he had had conjugal relations with his wife for the procreation of children.

1 Cf. *Seven Books of Questions on the Heptateuch* (*Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri septem*, CSEL 28.3) 1.93.
2 Cf. Gen. 30.37-39.
3 Cf. *Questions on the Heptateuch* 1.95.
4 Cf. Gen. 31.41.
5 *Questions on the Heptateuch* 3.82; 3.85.
6 Cf. Exod. 30.7-8.
7 Cf. Lev. 15.16.
8 Cf. Lev. 22.5-6.

Likewise, where there is a question of how the high priest could be forbidden to enter during the funeral rites of his father,[9] for he could not become high priest—since there was one only—until after the death of the high priest, his father, I said: "For this reason, it was necessary that immediately after his father's death, before his burial, his son be appointed to succeed his father because of the incense of unbroken continuance which had to be offered twice a day."[10] This is the priest who was forbidden to enter after his father's death and before his burial. But I paid too little attention to the fact that this could have been enjoined rather because of those who were to be high priests, not by succeeding their fathers who were high priests, but who, nevertheless, were among sons, that is to say, among the descendants of Aaron, if perchance, a high priest either did not have sons or if he had sons who were so wicked that none of them could succeed his father, just as Samuel succeeded the high priest Heli,[11] although he himself was not a son of a priest but yet among his sons, that is to say, among the descendants of Aaron.[12]

(3) Furthermore, with regard to the thief to whom it was said: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise,"[13] I stated as certain that he had not been visibly baptized, although this is uncertain and we should rather believe that he was baptized,[14] as I argued later in another place.[15] Likewise, what I said in the fifth book, namely, that where mothers are mentioned in the Gospel genealogies, "they are never mentioned except in connection with fathers,"[16] is undoubtedly true. It is, however, irrelevant to the subject under discussion. On the other hand, this discussion dealt

9 Cf. Lev. 21.11; Num. 9.6-13.
10 Cf. *Questions on the Heptateuch* 3.83.
11 Cf. 1 Kings 1.3; 1 Kings 2.26-28.
12 Cf. *Retr.* 2.69.2.
13 Cf. Luke 23.43.
14 Cf. *Questions on the Heptateuch* 3.84.
15 Cf. *Retr.* 1.25, quest. 62.
16 Cf. *Questions on the Heptateuch* 5.46.

with those who married the wives of their brothers or relatives who had died without offspring, because of the two fathers of Joseph, one of whom Matthew mentions, the other Luke. I discussed this question carefully in the present work when I was reviewing my work, *Against Faustus, the Manichaean.*[17]

This work begins as follows: "When the Holy Scriptures which are called canonical."

NOTE. Augustine states that he wrote this work, *Questions* (here, as elsewhere in the *Retractations,* Augustine does not give the full title), at the same time as that which it follows in the *Retractations,* that is, in 419. Both of these works treat of the same books of Holy Scripture, the Heptateuch and the full title of this, the second one, is *Quaestionum* <*in Heptateuchum*> *libri septem: Seven Books of Questions on the Heptateuch.* According to Augustine's own testimony in the *Retractations,* although he presented the points in these questions for investigation rather than for solution, more questions are actually solved than unresolved. He also states there that he was prevented from making a similar study of the Books of Kings because, when this projected study was in its initial stages, more urgent matters forced him to abandon it. He gives specific examples of passages that were not satisfactorily explained and illustrates the exegetical difficulties involved to prove his point. In addition, he corrects the interpretation of two passages, an unusual procedure at this period of his authorship, since, for the most part, he seemed satisfied with his later works.

The work under consideration, then, is not concerned, as was the preceding work on the Heptateuch, with linguistic difficulties that could lead to misinterpretation, but rather with an explanation of passages that presented exegetical problems.

17 Cf. *Retr.* 2.33.2; 2.42.

Chapter 82

FOUR BOOKS ON THE SOUL AND ITS ORIGIN

(De anima et eius origine libri quattuor)

At the same time, a certain Vincent Victor found a work of mine at Caesarea in Mauretania at the home of a certain Spanish priest, Peter. In a certain passage of this work which deals with the origin of the soul of individual men, I admitted that I did not know whether they are transmitted from that of the first man and thereafter from parents, or whether, just as to that first man, individual souls are given to individual men without any transmission,[1] and yet that I know that the soul is not body but spirit. In opposition to these views of mine, Vincent Victor addressed two books to this same Peter which the monk Renatus sent to me from Caesarea. After I read them, in response, I answered in four others: one to the monk Renatus; another to the priest Peter, and two to Victor himself. But even though the one to Peter is as long as a book, nevertheless, it is a letter which I did not want to separate from the other three books. Moreover, in all these books, while I was discussing numerous pertinent points, I defended my uncertainty about the origin of the souls which are given to individual men, and I pointed out both his many errors and the perverseness of his presumption. Nevertheless, I treated this young man with as much lenity as possible, not as one to be condemned too hastily, but as one to be further instructed, and I have received from him a communication containing his retraction.[2]

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1 Cf. *Retr.* 1.7; 1.14; 2.71.
2 Cf. *Letter* 190.

The book of this work addressed to Renatus begins as follows: "Your sincerity towards us"; that to Peter, thus: "To my lord, my dearly beloved father[3] and fellow-priest, Peter"; the first of the last two to Vincent Victor begins as follows: "As to what I thought I ought to write to you."

NOTE. Though various dates are assigned to the treatise, *On the Soul and Its Origin*, namely, 419 (by the Maurists), 420-421 (by Zarb and others), and 423-424 (by still others), the one generally given is 419/420.

The circumstances that led to its writing are given by Augustine in his *Retractations (supra)*. One of the addressees of the work is a certain Vincent Victor who had prefixed "Vincent" to his name in deference to the Rogatist Vincent (cf. *On the Soul and Its Origin* 3.2.2), the successor of the schismatic Bishop of Cartenna, Rogatus, and who, according to reports, had abandoned Rogatist error and become a Catholic (cf. *ibid.* 1.2.2; 3.2.2). Victor had come upon a work of Augustine in Mauretania Caesariensis at the home of a Spanish priest, Peter (cf. *Retractations, supra; On the Soul and Its Origin* 1.1.1). In it, he found Augustine's admission that he was undecided about the time and manner of the origin of the soul, namely, whether all souls are created in and propagated from the soul of the first man, Adam, and subsequently from parents to their offspring (Traducianism), or whether a soul is given to each individual as to Adam without propagation (Creationism). In strong opposition to Augustine's hesitancy on this point and to his assertion that the soul is incorporeal, Vincent wrote a work of two books. This work was sent to Augustine by the monk, Renatus (cf. *On the Soul and Its Origin* 1.1.1; 2.1.1), the same person who, in 418, had shown a letter of Optatus to Augustine. In reply, Augustine wrote a letter (*Letter* 190).

The present treatise of four books is Augustine's answer to Vincent's presumptuous work. The first book is addressed to Renatus; the second to the Spanish priest, Peter; and the third and fourth to Vincent himself. Augustine tells us that he dealt with this young man of misguided eloquence (cf. *On the Soul and Its Origin* 1.3.3) as one to be instructed rather than censured (cf. *Retractations, supra*).

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3 "Father" in the translation above reposes on Knöll's reading, *patri*, against which, in all previous editions and in a number of manuscripts, stands *fratri* ("brother"). As Jülicher points out in questioning Knöll's reading (*Theologische Literaturzeitung* 28 [1903] 53), it is as "brother" that Augustine addresses the Spanish priest in the body of the letter (PL 44.495; CSEL 60.336).

On the Soul and Its Origin is not only a defense of Augustine's hesitancy to come to a decision about the soul's origin, but also a reproach of Vincent for his rashness in attempting to solve a problem he was incapable of dealing with, and a warning against the intermingling of errors [emanation of the Manichaeans, pre-existence of souls taught by the Origenists, and salvation without baptism of the Pelagians] contained in Vincent's work. In the first book, Augustine presents his defense and his reproach and asserts that the soul is created by God out of nothing (cf. *ibid.* 1.4.4). In the second book, he warns Peter against either approving or considering as Catholic the views of Vincent which are contrary to Christian teaching, and he refutes the errors of Vincent. In the third and fourth books, he advises Vincent to correct his errors if he wishes to be considered a Catholic, condemns the previously refuted errors, defends his own indecision on the problem of the origin of the soul, and upholds his contention that the soul is spirit and not body.

The question of the soul's origin was a lifelong problem for Augustine and one that was still unsolved at his death. Though he was inclined toward Traducianism, which would facilitate an explanation of the doctrine of original sin, he was reluctant about making a definite choice. In earlier works, *On Free Choice* written 388-395 (cf. *Retractations* 1.8), and the letter-treatise to Jerome in which Augustine consulted Jerome on this question (*Letter* 166, *ca.* 415), Augustine presents four views regarding the origin of the soul (cf. *On Free Choice* 3.20.56-3.21.59; *Letter* 166.7-10; cf. further M. C. D'Arcy, S.J., "The Philosophy of St. Augustine," in *A Monument to St. Augustine* 172-173). In the above-mentioned letter to Jerome, he refers to his work, *On Free Choice* (cf. *Letter* 166; *On Free Choice* 3.20.56-3.21.59), and repeats the above-mentioned four hypotheses contained in it.

Augustine refers to the question of the origin of the soul again and again, both in earlier and later writings. Compare, for example: *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis,* especially Book 7, where he begins the discussion of the origin of the soul of man; Book 10, where he resumes the discussion of this question, and especially the end of Book 10, where he warns against the teaching of Tertullian that the soul is corporeal; *Letter* 164.20, *ca.* 414; *Letter* 166.1-9 and 1-28, 415 A.D. He again reverts to this problem at a later time: in a letter written in 418 to Bishop Optatus of Tingitana (modern Tangier) in Mauretania, *Letter* 190.1-26; in *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 3.10.26, a work written in 420 and addressed to Boniface (cf. *Retractations* 2.87 Note); in writings against Julian, namely, *Against Julian* 5.4.17, 421 A.D., and in *An*

Unfinished Work against Julian 2.178 and 4.104, *ca.* 428/429 (cf. *Retractations* 2.88 and 2.71 NOTES, where Augustine's works dealing with questions related to the origin of the soul are also discussed. Cf. also M. C. D'Arcy, *loc. cit.,* a brief but excellent summation of this question).

Chapter 83

TWO BOOKS TO POLLENTIUS ON ADULTEROUS MARRIAGES

(Ad Pollentium de adulterinis coniugiis libri duo)

I wrote two books on adulterous marriages with the desire of solving, according to the Scriptures, to the best of my ability, a very difficult question. I do not know whether I have done this very clearly. On the contrary, I think that I did not reach a perfect solution of this question, although I have clarified many of its obscurities, as anyone who reads intelligently will be able to judge.

The first book of this work begins as follows: "Dearly beloved brother, Pollentius, the first question is"; the second: "To those things which you wrote to me."

NOTE. The moral-exegetical work, *To Pollentius, on Adulterous Marriages,* was written about 419. It is the last of Augustine's four treatises on marriage and related subjects reviewed by him in the *Retractations.* Collectively, these four works contain the doctrine of the sacrament of matrimony as developed by Augustine from an elementary to a more advanced stage. In the order of their composition they are: *On the Good of Marriage, ca.* 401 (cf. *Retractations* 2.48); *On Holy Virginity, ca.* 401 (cf. *Retractations* 2.49); *On Marriage and Concupiscence, ca.* 419-421/422 (cf. *Retractations* 2.79); and the present treatise.

When Augustine examines the treatise, *On Adulterous Marriages,* in his *Retractations,* he states that, though in it he did not reach a perfect solution of the problem of adulterous marriages, he clarified many of its obscurities. He dealt with this subject and questions related to it in other works also. For example, in a work written about a quarter of a century

earlier, *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount (ca.* 393/394), he asserts that a woman who divorces her husband because of conjugal infidelity should not be permitted to remarry (cf. *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* 1.14.39 and 1.16.43, trans. by J. J. Jepson, S.S., ACW 5.43 and note 110, p. 187). When he examined this work in his *Retractations,* he stated that he did not know what fornication the Lord meant: that spoken of in Psalm 72.27 or in 1 Cor. 6.15. In this examination, he cautions the reader that his arguments on this difficult and important subject are not sufficient and advises him either to consult his later works or the works of other writers who have dealt more thoroughly with this subject, or to read, more penetratingly, material on this topic that will evoke a greater response (cf. *Retractations* 1.18, *supra).* In passages in two other earlier works, namely, *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis, ca.* 401-405, and *On Faith and Works, ca.* 413, and in a later work, *Against Julian, ca.* 421 (cf. *On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 9.7.12 and *Retractations* 2.50; *On Faith and Works* 19.35 and *Retractations* 2.64; and *Against Julian* 5.12), Augustine discusses the purpose, the three *goods,* and the indissolubility of marriage, and points out the sacramental character of all marriages, thus showing that Christian marriage is a sacrament in a particular way.

We see, then, that Augustine began his attempt to solve the problems concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage in the first decade of his long literary career, and for more than a quarter of a century, through his writings, he continued to clarify and solve the problems concerned.

The present treatise is a reply to questions proposed in letters to Augustine at two different times by a certain Pollentius. After Augustine had answered the queries in Pollentius' first letter, some zealous friends edited this reply (cf. *On Adulterous Marriages* 1.1), though he intended to publish it at the same time as his response to later inquiries of Pollentius. The first book contains the first of these answers; the second book, the second.

In this work, Augustine bases on Holy Scripture his arguments on the problems concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. He quotes passage after passage, alternating them skilfully with the discussions they support. Though several topics pertinent to marriage are considered and solutions carefully worked out, the major theme of this treatise is the indissolubility of the conjugal bond: Augustine strongly affirms that a Christian separated from his (or her) spouse for any reason whatsoever, including fornication, is strictly forbidden to remarry during the lifetime of the other spouse. The Christian who does so, he affirms, contracts an adulterous marriage.

In brief, he argues that the marriage bond can be severed only by the death of either party to a marriage.

In his Introduction to the translation of this work, C. T. Huegelmeyer, M.M., gives a good summary. I quote: "While considering the state of marriage as a natural contract and a social institution regulated by the Gospel, as well as the sacramental character of matrimony in a special way, Augustine systematized the rather elementary doctrine which preceded him and developed it by establishing it on a firm foundation, largely in the course of his struggles against the Manichaean and Pelagian heretics" (FC 27.55). [The work is set out in FC 27 under the Latin title *De incompetentibus nuptiis (On Wrongful Marriages)* found in the *Indiculum* of Possidius. In the *Retractations,* PL 40, and CSEL 41, the title is *De adulterinis coniugiis.*]

Chapter 84

TWO BOOKS AGAINST AN ADVERSARY OF THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS

(Contra adversarium legis et prophetarum libri duo)

Meanwhile, when a book of a certain heretic—either of the Marcionite sect[1] or of some one or other of those sects whose error consists in the belief that God did not make this world and that the God of the Law which was given to Moses[2] and of the Prophets who hold to the same Law is not the true God, but a most wicked demon—was read at Carthage to a large number of people who were assembled on a square near the sea, and were listening most attentively, some of my brethren, Christians full of zeal, obtained a copy of it and, without any delay, forwarded it to me for refutation, urgently entreating me not to postpone my reply. I have refuted it in two books which I have accordingly entitled: *Against an Adversary of the Law and the Prophets,* because the manu-

1 Cf. *On Heresies* 22.
2 Cf. John 7.19.

script itself which was sent to me did not have the name of the author.

This work begins as follows: "To the book which you sent, dearly beloved brethren."

NOTE. In his *Retractations,* Augustine gives the circumstances that brought about his writing of the treatise, *Against an Adversary of the Law and the Prophets,* and briefly summarizes the doctrine it refutes. It was written, he says, to refute a work of an anonymous Marcionite or adherent of a similar sect (he is not certain to which party the writer belonged; cf. the present treatise 1.1), at the urgent request of certain zealous Christians who sent him a copy of the document asking him to reply to it without delay. It was being read at Carthage to numerous and attentive groups of Christians. In his refutation of this work, written in 420, Augustine denied the Marcionite view that God did not create the world, and that the God of the Law given to Moses is a most wicked demon (cf. *Retractations, supra; Against an Adversary of the Law and the Prophets* 1.1).

The doctrine of the famous and influential second-century heretic, Marcion, known principally through Tertullian, was a reaction to the extreme form of Gnosticism, and yet it contained the substance of Gnosticism, though rejecting its metaphysics. His main tenets were an absolute rejection of the Old Testament, a violent opposition to Judaism, and the opposing of the love of a God heretofore unknown who revealed Himself in Christ, to the angry, just, Creator God of the Jews (cf. J. Lebreton, S.J., and J. Zeiller, *Heresy and Orthodoxy* 49-61; Justin Martyr, *Apology* 26 and 58; B. Altaner, *op. cit.* 143; Epiphanius, *Panarion*). He rejected the Old Testament on the ground that it was the work of a rigidly just, cruel, and wicked God, and issued his own version of the New Testament. This version contained the Gospel of St. Luke, excepting chapters 1-2, and ten of the Epistles of St. Paul. He maintained that the Gospels he included reveal a good and merciful God. He omitted the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Pastorals (two Epistles to Timothy and one to Titus). He also wrote a work no longer extant, *Antitheses,* a collection of texts from the Old and New Testaments arranged in parallel columns. From the alleged contradictions he saw in these texts, he concluded that they were irreconcilable. The lost *Antitheses* can be reconstructed from the detailed refutation of it by Tertullian and from the refutations of other writers who also opposed it.

Marcion set up a separate church with its own hierarchy, which lasted in many places until the fifth century. Marcionism

was widely disseminated, gaining converts in Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Syria, Persia, Cyprus, as well as in Rome. Its opponents in the second part of the second century indicate its spread to their areas. Among the Christian writers who opposed it were Dionysius (Corinth), Theophilus (Antioch), Philip (Crete), Modestus (cf. Eusebius 4.25), Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. The decline of its influence was due, not so much to the imperial edicts against heresy, as to its absorption by other newer heresies such as Manichaeism. It is mentioned only once in the Theodosian Code, but apparently it survived locally in some places for many years. The Council of Trullo (held at Constantinople in 692; cf. Bihlmeyer-Tüchle, *op. cit.* 300) was concerned with reconciling the Marcionites, and there is further evidence that it still existed in the tenth century. It was in the second century, however, that Marcionism presented the greatest menace to the Church. Tertullian (born *ca.* 160, died after 220) called Marcion "the wolf of the Pontus." From Augustine's attack on it in the present treatise, it appears that, in his day, opposition to it was still necessary.

Chapter 85

TWO BOOKS AGAINST GAUDENTIUS, BISHOP OF THE DONATISTS

(Contra Gaudentium, Donatistarum episcopum, libri duo)

During the same period, Dulcitius, tribune and notary, here in Africa was the enforcer of the imperial laws issued against the Donatists. After he had dispatched a letter to Gaudentius of Thamugadi, bishop of the Donatists—one of the seven whom they had chosen as spokesmen for their defense at our conference[1]—urging him to Catholic unity and dissuading him from that conflagration by which he was threatening to burn himself and his followers, as well as the very church in which he was, and adding that if they believed that they were right, they should flee according to the precept

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.52; 2.53.

of the Lord Christ[2] rather than consume themselves by sacrilegious fires, Gaudentius wrote two letters in reply, one short—because, according to him, the carrier was in a hurry—the other long by comparison, in which he replied in greater detail and with greater care. The tribune mentioned above thought that these letters should be sent to me in order that I, rather than he, might refute them. I argued against both of them in one book. After this had come into the hands of this same Gaudentius, he answered directly to me in writing what seemed best to him, replying without any real argument, but revealing rather that he was neither giving an answer nor keeping silence. Although this is obvious to those who read intelligently and compare our words with his, nevertheless, I did not wish to leave his letter, such as it was, without an answer. This explains why there are two books of ours against him.

This work begins as follows: "Gaudentius, bishop of the Donatists in Thamugadi."

NOTE. The first of the two books of this treatise, *Against Gaudentius, Bishop of the Donatists,* was written at the request of Dulcitius in answer to two letters of Gaudentius; the second book was written in reply to Gaudentius' response to the first book. The date of composition of both books is 420. We possess not only the treatise itself (CSEL 53.199-274) and Augustine's comments on it in the *Retractations,* but also a letter of Augustine to Dulcitius (*Letter* 204, 420 A.D.) which includes material relevant to it.

The tribune and notary, Marcellinus, who presided over the famous Conference of Carthage (cf. *Retractations, supra; ibid.* 1.19 NOTE) was succeeded by Dulcitius, who, by virtue of the same office, had to promulgate the imperial decrees against the Donatists. Greatly aroused by the communications of Dulcitius concerning these decrees, Gaudentius, Donatist Bishop of Thamugadi (modern Timgad, a town in Numidia), and one of the seven advocates of the Donatists at the Carthage Conference (cf. *Retractations, supra; Gesta collationis Carthagini habitae,* PL 11.1227) threatened to set fire to his church and himself and to some of his followers assembled there with

2 Cf. Matt. 10.23.

him (cf. *Retractations, supra*). This suicidal threat was due, according to Augustine, to a misunderstanding of Dulcitius' words: "You know that you are even to be put to a well-deserved death" (cf. *Letter* 204). Though Augustine remonstrated with Dulcitius for having threatened death, he assured the latter that he interpreted these words as they were intended, namely, as referring to "the death they [the Donatists] wanted to inflict on themselves" (*ibid.*). To try to dissuade Gaudentius from carrying out his alleged intention, Dulcitius sent him a letter advising him that if he and his followers felt that they were right, they should flee, according to the precept of the Apostle: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to another" [Matt. 10.23] rather than consume themselves by sacrilegious fires (*ibid.*). Augustine commends Dulcitius for showing restraint by responding to Gaudentius' threat by letter rather than by using more severe measures (cf. *Letter* 204).

In reply to Dulcitius' letter, Gaudentius sent two letters, a short one for whose brevity, according to Augustine, Gaudentius accounts by saying that the messenger was in a hurry (cf. *Retractations, supra*), and a long one which, in the eyes of its writer, was a complete and carefully penned message (*ibid.*), in which Gaudentius attempted to defend his position on the authority of Holy Scripture. Dulcitius sent both these letters to Augustine asking him to refute them (*ibid.; Letter* 204). Augustine agreed to do this for the sake of the people of Thamugadi, despite the fact that he was very busy and that he had often refuted "this nonsense," namely, the oft-repeated arguments of the Donatists which he then summarizes (cf. *Letter* 204). To these refutations, he added one not previously included (*ibid.*).

The first book of *Against Gaudentius, Bishop of the Donatists* is Augustine's promised reply to these two letters of Gaudentius. To this book, Gaudentius responded with a work in which he does not reply to Augustine's arguments and which he wrote only to show that he was not passing them over in silence (*ibid.*). This, says Augustine, is obvious to those who intelligently read both his own work and that of Gaudentius.

In this first book, Augustine refutes the arguments of Gaudentius, point by point, on the questions of persecution, the so-called martyrdom of the Donatists, the enforcement of the imperial laws, the action of the Church in dealing with matters under her jurisdiction, and similar Donatist positions. He also chides Gaudentius for failure to cooperate in securing Church unity and invites him to join the Catholic Church.

In the second book, a refutation of Gaudentius' reply to the first book, Augustine takes up and skilfully refutes the arguments of this longer letter. Old controverted points in the

Donatist-Catholic controversy, brought up anew by Gaudentius in sharply defined language, are again patiently taken up, one by one, by Augustine and answered. Among the important arguments Augustine opposes are: the frequently repeated charge of the Donatists that Cyprian, by urging the necessity of Church holiness, is on their side; the charge against the Church of persecution; the inconsistency of the Donatists in dealing with the Maximianists; and the justification of coercion when required to enforce the imperial laws.

This is the last of Augustine's anti-Donatist treatises. It contributed to the eventual extinction of the Donatist schism which, at this time, was in its declining stage. More than a quarter of a century had passed since he had written his first anti-Donatist work, the poem entitled *A Psalm against the Party of Donatus* (393/394; cf. *Retractations* 1.19).

Only incidental references to Donatism are made by Augustine during the last decade of his life. For example, in the anti-Pelagian work, *Against Julian* (421; cf. *Retractations* 2.88), we find references to the case of Caecilian (1.3.7) and the Conference of Carthage (3.1.5). In *On Heresies* 69, written *ca.* 429, Augustine gives the origin of the Donatist schism, a brief treatment of the Circumcellions, and comments on Donatus [the Great] who succeeded Majorinus. Last, in the anti-Pelagian work, *An Unfinished Work against Julian* 1.10, 429/430, Augustine speaks of the successful issue of the imperial government's use of coercion in dealing with the Donatists. The last two works were written after the *Retractations*. In addition, Augustine dealt with this schism incidentally in numerous letters and sermons.

Chapter 86

ONE BOOK AGAINST LYING

(Contra mendacium liber unus)

At that time also, I wrote a book against lying. The purpose of this work was to track down the Priscillianist heretics who think that their heresy ought to be concealed, not only by denying, but also by lying.[1] It seemed to certain Catholics

1 Cf. *Against Lying* 11.25.

that they ought to pretend that they were Priscillianists[2] in order to uncover their artifices. I composed this book to prevent this from being done.[3]

This book begins as follows: "You have sent me many things to read."

NOTE. The moral treatise, *Against Lying,* written about 420, is addressed to a certain Consentius, who may be the writer of *Letter* 119 (410) to which Augustine's *Letter* 120 (*ca.* 410) is a response. By some, however, he is thought to be the Consentius to whom Augustine wrote *Letter* 205 (which bears the same date as the present treatise) and who, at this time, was living among the Priscillianist heretics.

On the basis of Consentius' statement in *Letter* 119: "For, many in these islands in which we live, while making for the road by a straight embankment, run into the twisting bypath of error, and will there be any Augustine whose authority they would respect, whose teaching they would believe, by whose genius they would be overcome? (FC 18.299), Bardenhewer conjectures that Consentius lived in the Balearic Islands off the east coast of Spain (cf. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* IV 500). It has also been suggested that he was a Catholic laymen. On the other hand, if he is the person to whom Augustine wrote *Letter* 205, he may have been a monk of the Lerins or St. Victor monasteries founded on the islands off the coast of Southern France (cf. FC 18.294 n. 1).

Against Lying is Augustine's reply to a question of Consentius: May a member of the Catholic Church pretend to be a Priscillianist in order to discover the dogmas of that sect, which obliges its adherents to keep them secret? Augustine, in reply, firmly asserts that lying, even for the purpose of exposing the Priscillianists, "the hidden wolves dressed in sheep's clothing" (cf. *Against Lying* 6.11, trans. by Sr. M. Sarah Muldowney, FC 16.137) is strictly prohibited. He suggests two of several possible ways of uncovering their hidden places, namely, the revealing of these places by those they wish to lead astray or by those converted to their views for a time who have returned to the fold of the Catholic Church (cf. *ibid.* 137-138). He urges truth as a means of combatting their errors: "This happens more readily," he says, "if their impious error is upset by truthful arguments rather than by false snares" *(ibid.).* He distinguishes between lying and jocose remarks, noncommitment, fiction, figurative language, and error, and makes it clear

2 Cf. *ibid.* 7.18.
3 Cf. *Retr.* 1.26.

that the Priscillianists are to be refuted and weakened by truth (*ibid.* 6.12, p. 138f.) but never imitated (*ibid.* 2.2, p. 127).

This treatise is, then, a refutation of the views of the Priscillianists as explained and advocated by a Priscillianist bishop, Dictinius, in a work in which he defends lying for religious purposes (*mendacium necessarium*). As a result of his teachings, certain zealous Catholics held that it was right for them to pretend they were Priscillianists in order to discover unidentified Priscillianists and their hidden doctrine (cf. *supra*). This led to Consentius' concern and his request that Augustine solve this problem. Though Dictinius, Bishop of Astorga, together with many other Priscillianists, was readmitted to the Church after the Council of Toledo (400), his *Libra* [*The Pound*]—so-called "because its material is treated as twelve questions set forth as so many ounces" (FC 16.132 with n. 4)—continued to have a marked influence for some time to come. Pope Leo the Great (440-461), in his letter to Turribius, condemns Dictinius' writings (cf. Smith and Wace, DCB 1.826; C. M. Molas, DHGE 14.394-395).

Augustine's treatise makes it unmistakably clear that he, in no case, considers lying justifiable. He succinctly stated his position on this question as follows: "In such cases, my brother, we always should recall with fear, 'Whoever disowns me before men, I in turn will disown him before my Father in Heaven' [Matt. 10.33]. Or does he not disown Christ before men who disowns Him before the Priscillianists in order that, by a blasphemous lie, he may expose and catch them? But who, I pray you, doubts that Christ is disowned when He is said not to be as He truly is, and when He is said to be as the Priscillianists believe Him?" (*Against Lying* 6.10, FC 16.137). This view is reaffirmed in a letter written to a Bishop Ceretius (he was, perhaps, a Gallic or Spanish bishop since Priscillianism was confined to Spain and Aquitania). Though this letter was concerned mainly with the apocryphal Scriptures and with a hymn attributed to Christ, in it is found also a denunciation of the Priscillianists' falsification, and their commandment: "Some, indeed, with the usual failing of men, lie because it is a custom of this life or through frailty, but these are said to have it as a commandment, in the hateful teaching of their heresy, to lie even with a false oath to keep the secret of their dogma. Men who have had experience of them and who have belonged to them, but have been delivered from them by the mercy of God, recall these words of this commandment: 'Swear true or falsely, but betray not the secret'" (*Letter* 237, FC 32.184).

This work may be considered a replacement of, or a supplement to, an earlier writing of Augustine which also deals with

the problem of lying, namely, *On Lying*, about which the author speaks rather disparagingly in his *Retractations* (2.26). There is no evidence that he did not approve of his treatment of this problem in the present treatise, *Against Lying* (cf. *Retractations, supra*). In his treatise, *On Faith, Hope, and Charity*, written a short time later (*ca.* 421), Augustine wrote: "This discussion gives rise to a very difficult and intricate question, that is, whether duty ever requires a just man to lie. This question I dealt with in a large book, some answer being required" (*On Faith, Hope, and Charity* 6.18, FC 2.383; *Retractations* 2.89).

Chapter 87

FOUR BOOKS AGAINST TWO LETTERS OF THE PELAGIANS

(Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum libri quattuor)

I wrote the next four books, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians*,[1] to Boniface, bishop of the Roman church,[2] who, after they had come into his hands, sent them to me, because in them he found my name calumniously used.

This work begins as follows: "Indeed I have known you through the fame of your celebrated name."

NOTE. The treatise, *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians*, written about 420, is addressed to Pope Boniface I (418-422). It is a refutation of two Pelagian letters sent to Augustine by the Pontiff because he had found in them Augustine's name ignominiously inserted (cf. *Retractations, supra; Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* 1.1.3).

Augustine states that Julian was reported to have sent to Rome the first of these letters with the intention of finding or converting as many as possible to the Pelagian cause (cf. *ibid.*). Furthermore, Augustine indicates that Julian wrote this letter: "Let us now, therefore," he says, "answer the letter of Julian" (*ibid.* 1.2.4, CSEL 60.424-425).

According to Augustine, the second of these two letters was not composed by Julian alone, but by several bishops who sent it to Thessalonica. This statement confirms an earlier,

1 Cf. *On Heresies* 88.
2 Pope Boniface I (418-422).

more explicit one by Augustine: "I am making these answers to their own two letters, the one . . . which Julian is said to have sent to Rome . . . and the other which eighteen so-called bishops, participants in his error, dared to write to the bishop [Rufus] of Thessalonica with the intention, if possible, of converting him to their views" (*ibid.* 1.1.3). The bishops here referred to are the eighteen Italian prelates, one of whom was Julian, who were deposed and sent into exile for refusing to be signatories of the *Epistola tractoria* of Pope Zosimus, an encyclical condemning Pelagius, Caelestius, and the Pelagian heresy (cf. *Retractations* 2.59 and 2.88 NOTES).

In the first book of the present treatise, a refutation of the first letter of the Pelagians, Augustine defends Catholic teaching on free will, marriage, concupiscence in relation to marriage, and the righteousness of the saints and of St. Paul and the Apostles, against the calumnies and teachings of the Pelagians, and denies that he taught that Christ was not free from sin and that baptism does not remit all sins.

The second, third, and fourth books of this work were written in opposition to the second letter of the Pelagians. In the second book, Augustine clearly shows the falsity of the charge that Catholics fall into the error of Manichaeism by condemning Pelagianism, disproves the accusation that was brought against the Catholic clergy in connection with the condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius, and defends Catholic teaching on grace and free will against the false teaching of the Pelagians. The third book is a defense and explanation of Catholic teaching on the effects of baptism, the Old and New Testaments, and the righteousness of the Apostles and the Prophets. It is also a denial of the Pelagian charge that Augustine affirmed the possibility of sin on the part of Christ. To clarify his position on these points, Augustine explained the nature of true righteousness and asserted that the Catholic point of view is midway between that of the Pelagians and the Manichaeans. He contrasts the heretical teaching of the Pelagians with Catholic truth which, he affirms, is based on divine authority and on the light of truth.

The fourth book of this treatise deals with the rest of the second letter of the Pelagians. Here, Augustine sums up the errors of the Pelagians under five headings: (1) their praise of man; (2) marriage; (3) the power of the Law; (4) the self-sufficiency of the human will, and (5) the sinlessness of the saints. To the views of the Pelagians on these points of doctrine, he opposes the Catholic doctrine on original sin, the transmission of sin to offspring, the necessity of the Gospel for eternal salvation, the necessity of grace, and the universal sinfulness of man. At this point, he strengthens and confirms

his arguments by references, not only to Holy Scripture—as he does throughout the treatise—but also to the testimony of Cyprian and Ambrose regarding God's grace, original sin, and the righteousness of man.

Chapter 88

SIX BOOKS AGAINST JULIAN

(Contra Iulianum libri sex)

Meanwhile, the four books by Julian, the Pelagian, which I have mentioned above[1] also came into our hands. In them, I discovered that not all those passages which the person who sent them to Count Valerius had excerpted from them, had been cited to this Count as they had been written by Julian, but that some of them had been altered in some way. Accordingly, I wrote six books against these four.[2] My first two books, on the basis of the testimony of the saints who have defended the Catholic faith since the time of the Apostles, refute the impudence of Julian, who thought that we should be charged with Manichaean teachings,[3] in that we teach that original sin which is washed away "by the bath of regeneration,"[4] not only in the case of adults, but also in that of little children, is inherited from Adam. But I have shown in the second part of my first book the extent to which Julian himself, in certain of his views, supports the Manichaeans. Moreover, my other four books one by one refute his books one by one. Yet, in the fifth book of this work, extensive and elaborately worked out, when I mentioned that a deformed husband was accustomed to put, during coition, a beautiful picture before his wife so that she would not give

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.79.
2 Cf. *An Unfinished Work against Julian* 4.5.
3 Cf. *ibid.* 1.2.
4 Cf. Titus 3.5.

birth to deformed offspring, my memory failed me, for I stated as certain the name of the man who was in the habit of doing this, although it is not certain.[5] Soranus, a writer on medicine, wrote that a king of Cyprus was accustomed to do this, but he did not state his name.

This book begins in this way: "Julian, your contumelies and your slanderous words."

NOTE. *Against Julian,* written about 421, is the third of Augustine's anti-Pelagian polemics against Julian, the heretical Bishop of Eclanum. It is also the last of these three works reviewed by him in his *Retractations* (cf. *Retractations, supra,* and 2.79 and 2.87 NOTES). A fourth, *An Unfinished Work against Julian (Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum),* written about 429/430, was not completed, as the title shows.

Julian, born in Apulia (cf. *An Unfinished Work against Julian* 6.18) about 386, was the son of Memorius, bishop of a see in Italy whose exact location is not known but is sometimes conjectured to be Capua, and of a noblewoman, Juliana. In a letter to Memorius, Augustine expresses warm affection for his correspondent and for his son, Julian (cf. *Letter* 101, 408/409 A.D.).

About 417, Pope Innocent I elevated Julian to the episcopacy and, according to Marius Mercator, his contemporary, assigned him to Eclanum (cf. Marius Mercator, *Symbolum Theodori Mopsuesteni et eius refutatio,* Preface 2, where Julian is referred to as follows: ". . . *Iulianum ex episcopo oppidi Eclanensis,*" PL 48.214-215). Variant manuscript readings, however, make a decision about the site of Julian's see controversial, though Eclanum is generally accepted.

It is difficult to understand Julian's change from orthodoxy (cf. Marius Mercator, *Commonitorium* 3.2) the following year, 418, when he and seventeen fellow bishops refused to sign Pope Zosimus' *Epistola tractoria,* a circular letter condemning Pelagianism (cf. *Retractations* 2.79 and 2.87 NOTES). Augustine, however, intimates that, in the eyes of Pope Innocent, Julian may have been suspect (cf. *Against Julian* 1.4.13).

Julian and the seventeen fellow-dissident Italian bishops were canonically deposed and then exiled by an order of Emperor Honorius. From this time on, Julian began his self-defense and his attacks against the doctrines of the Catholic Church. He first sought refuge in Cilicia, under the tutelage of Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia. After the death of Pope

5 Cf. *Against Julian* 5.14.51; FC 35.292.

Boniface, he returned to Italy where, despite his appeal, the currently reigning pope, Celestine I, refused to review his case. Thence he went to Constantinople. Here, at first, Nestorius and the Emperor Theodosius II seemed sympathetic to his cause. Later, however, influenced perhaps by Mercator's *Commonitorium,* Theodosius, by an imperial edict, sent Julian into exile. Subsequent appeals made by him to Popes Sixtus III and Leo I were rejected. His death is believed to have occurred in Sicily about 454. Thus he outlived his adversary, Augustine, by almost a quarter of a century. Julian was condemned anew by Joannes Talaia, who became Bishop of Nola about 484.

The second phase of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings, his works against Julian (419-430), began with *On Marriage and Concupiscence.* It drew fire from Julian, who attacked the first book of this treatise in his *Four Books to Turbantius.* In reply to extracts from this work, Augustine wrote the second book of *On Marriage and Concupiscence* (cf. *Retractations* 2.79 NOTE). Later, Augustine, who was dissatisfied with his reply to these excerpts because they were limited and inaccurate (cf. *Letter* 207 to Claudius, *ca.* 412), wrote the present treatise, a refutation of the entire work of Julian, addressed to Turbantius. The work is not only a point-by-point refutation of Julian's attacks on Christian doctrine, but also a defense against Julian's charge of Manichaeism.

The first two books of this treatise refute in general Julian's arguments. In the first book, Augustine defends the doctrine of original sin as presented by him in the first book of *On Marriage and Concupiscence* against Julian's attack on it, and also defends those Catholics who, because of their support of this doctrine, were called Manichaeans. He bases his arguments on the testimony of the Greek and Latin Fathers, especially on those of Basil and John Chrysostom who, Julian claimed, favored his views. In the second book, he refutes the five arguments of the Pelagians against original sin and supports his position by making use of the opinions of ten illustrious orthodox writers, among whom were Irenaeus, Hilary, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Jerome. In the third book, Augustine refutes Julian's accusations by affirming the good of marriage and the evil of concupiscence. Here, in contradistinction to the Manichaeans, he affirms that original sin is transmitted as a result of Adam's sin. In the fourth book, he proves that the virtues of unbelievers are not true virtues, and again argues that concupiscence is an evil. He confirms these arguments by using Julian's self-incriminating opinions. In the fifth book, he gives an explanation of the hatred of Christians for the Pelagian doctrine which denies original sin, and he discountenances also Julian's attempt to argue against its existence. He

reaffirms that concupiscence is an evil and repeats his former denial of Julian's charge of Manichaeism against Catholics who affirm original sin and the evil of concupiscence. In the sixth book, Augustine attacks Julian's captious criticisms of the work, *On Marriage and Concupiscence.* To give strength to his arguments, he refers to the practice of infant baptism and makes use of passages from the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans and Corinthians to substantiate his arguments, opposing his own exposition of the Apostle's words to Julian's incorrect interpretation of them.

This work is one of the longest and the most important of Augustine's literary attacks on Pelagianism, a summation, as it were, of his previously written anti-Pelagian works. Its arguments indicate that in Augustine, Julian, the most learned exponent of Pelagianism, found a superior opponent.

The fourth work of Augustine against Julian of Eclanum (cf. *Retractations* 2.79; 2.87; 2.88 NOTES), and presumably the last work of his life, *An Unfinished Work against Julian,* composed about 428-430, was written, as the dates indicate, after the *Retractations.* In a letter to Quodvultdeus *(Letter* 224, 427 or 428 A.D.), Augustine mentions that he is currently working on this treatise, a reply to the eight books of Julian, five of which, he says, he has already received from Alypius *(ibid.).* The work of Julian to which Augustine refers, *Eight Books for Florus (Ad Florum),* is a bitterly violent attack on Augustine personally and on his mother, as well as on his anti-Pelagian teachings written some years previously. Augustine's reply, *An Unfinished Work against Julian,* is a lengthy treatise in which the author quotes and refutes argument by argument Julian's work on the controversial questions of original sin, free choice of the human will, and concupiscence. For a good résumé of this work, cf. V. Bourke, *op. cit.* 293-294; Portalié, trans. by Bastian 57-58.

Chapter 89

ONE BOOK ON FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY

(De fide, spe, caritate liber unus)

I also wrote a book, *On Faith, Hope, and Charity,* for the person to whom it is addressed had asked me for some work of mine to have on hand always, the type the Greeks call an

enchiridion.[1] In this, in my opinion, I have adequately covered how God is to be worshiped,[2] a worship which Divine Scripture defines as man's true wisdom.[3]

This book begins as follows: "I cannot say, dearly beloved son, Lawrence, how much I delight in your learning."

NOTE. Augustine wrote the treatise, *On Faith, Hope, and Charity,* after the death of Jerome (September 30, 419 or 420), as he clearly indicates when he refers therein to "Jerome the priest, of holy memory" (23.87, FC 2.442), and before he composed *The Eight Questions of Dulcitius* about 422/423/425, in which he quotes the present treatise (cf. *The Eight Questions of Dulcitius,* Question One, FC 16.438; *Retractations* 2.91 NOTE). On this evidence and from its position in the *Retractations,* this work is thought to have been written about 421.

Under the title, *On Faith, Hope, and Charity,* this work is mentioned in a letter to Darius, *Letter* 231, *ca.* 429, where Augustine states that he is sending a copy of the treatise and other treatises to his Christian friend. It is also mentioned in several places in the treatise itself, Augustine referring to it as an *enchiridion* or handbook, a term he also uses in his *Retractations* (cf. *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* 1.4, 1.6, 33.122; *Retractations, supra).* It is under this title, *Enchiridion,* that it is most commonly known.

Augustine wrote this work in response to the request made by a certain Lawrence in a letter:

> In requesting me to deal with great matters in short compass, do you ask for an answer still more closely packed? Or do you perhaps wish that I explain in a short discourse just how it is that God should be worshiped? (1.2) . . . According to your letter, your wish is that I compose a book for you, to serve as what is called a handbook (*enchiridion*), that is, one you may always have at hand. It is to contain answers to certain questions: After what, most of all, should one strive? What, chiefly, given the sundry heresies, should one shun? In what measure does reason come to the help of religion, or what lack of accord is there with reason when faith stands alone? What holds the first and what the final place? What is the sum total of the whole doctrine? What is the sure and distinctive foundation of the Catholic faith? On all these points about which you ask, you will have true knowledge once you surely know what are the proper objects of our faith, our hope, and our charity, for these are the chief, nay, rather the only, guiding principles of our religion. Whoever speaks

1 Cf. *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* 1.3; 1.6; 33.122.
2 *Ibid.* 1.2; 1.3; 6.18; 15.56.
3 Cf. Job 28.28; *On the Trinity* 12.14.22 and 14.1.1; *On the Spirit and the Letter* 11.18; *Letters* 140 and 167.

against these is either altogether an alien to the name of Christ or a heretic" (1.4; FC 2.370-371, trans. by B. Peebles).

Lawrence, the questioner, was probably a layman, though in some manuscripts he is referred to as a deacon, and in one as a high Roman official (cf. *ibid* 358; ACW 3.8; LCC 7.20). He was the brother of the tribune and notary, Dulcitius (cf. *The Eight Questions on Dulcitius,* Question One, FC 16.438), and, according to Augustine, a learned man *(On Faith, Hope, and Charity* 1.1), as well as a zealous Christian (*ibid.* 33.122). The character of Augustine's replies to him and the style of the present treatise further testify to Lawrence's learning and "zeal in Christ" *(ibid.)*.

The treatise may be divided into five parts: (1) Introduction (1.1-2.8); (2) Discussion of faith (3.9-29.113); (3) On hope (30.114-116); (4) On charity (31.117-32.121), and (5) Conclusion (33.122). In the introduction, Augustine, after preliminary remarks, exhorts Lawrence to seek wisdom, that is, *piety,* the worship of God by faith, hope, and charity; briefly summarizes Lawrence's questions (1.4); and summarily treats the virtues of faith, hope, and charity (1.4-2.8). The second and longest part is devoted to an explanation of faith. Herein the author uses the Apostles' Creed as a guide to his exposition by writing a commentary on it. In this part, too, he refutes certain heresies and develops certain dogmatic and moral points. In the third part, which deals with the virtue of hope, Augustine uses the Lord's Prayer as a framework by giving a brief exposition of this prayer. The fourth part contains an explanation of the commandments, a means used by Augustine to make clear what charity embraces. In the fifth and last part, Augustine sums up this work as follows: "But there must be an end somewhere to this volume. It is for you to see whether you ought to call it a handbook or use it as such. As for myself, since I thought that your zeal in Christ was not to be despised, believing and hoping good things for you in the help of our Redeemer, and loving you greatly among the members of His body, I have written for you, as well as I was able, this book on faith, hope, and charity. May it be as useful as it is lengthy" (FC 2.471-472; cf. ACW 3.112; LCC 7.412).

This dogmatic-moral treatise is, then, a handbook or manual of Christian doctrine containing Augustine's systematic exposition of Christian dogma. It represents the advanced and matured theology of Augustine and is a synthesis of this theology based on the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. It is considered by theologians a truly Augustinian compendium of Christian doctrine. The author's commentaries on the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed in themselves, as well as his bringing them into relation to the three theolog-

ical virtues, make this work among the most important of Augustine's contributions to theology.

Chapter 90

ONE BOOK ON THE CARE TO BE TAKEN FOR THE DEAD, TO BISHOP PAULINUS

(De cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum episcopum liber unus)

I wrote a book, *On the Care to be Taken for the Dead,* after I had been asked in a letter whether, after death, it is advantageous for a person to have his body buried near the shrine of some saint.[1]

This book begins as follows: "To your Holiness, venerable fellow-bishop, Paulinus."

NOTE. About 421, Augustine wrote the short treatise, *On the Care to be Taken for the Dead, to Bishop Paulinus.* It is a long delayed response (cf. *On the Care to be Taken for the Dead* 1.1) to a question asked by Bishop Paulinus: Is it to the advantage of a soul to have his body buried near a memorial of a saint? (cf. *ibid.* 18.23). This was a question proposed to Paulinus by a devout lady, Flora. Paulinus, in turn, passed it on to Augustine for solution (cf. *ibid.* 1.1; *Retractations, supra).* The bearer of both letters was a certain Candinian, a priest with whom Augustine was loathe to part. Finally, as a result of the insistent reminding of this messenger, he at last drafted his reply (cf. *On the Care to be Taken for the Dead* 18.23).

The noble lady, Flora, had requested that her son, Cynegius, be buried near the shrine of St. Felix of Nola (cf. *On the Eight Questions of Dulcitius* 2.2; FC 16.443; *Retractations* 2.91). To this, Bishop Paulinus consented. Then Flora asked the bishop whether this burial near the site of a saint's shrine would be useful to the deceased. Unable to decide this or preferring to have Augustine's opinion on the matter, Paulinus asked Augustine's counsel. Augustine's answer in brief was

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1 Cf. *On the Care to be Taken for the Dead* 1.1.

that prayers for the dead are useful, in particular the offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Since prayers said at the memorial of saints are usually more fervent, they seem to Augustine to be more beneficial. "Truly," Augustine writes, "the fact that one is buried in a memorial of a martyr seems to me to benefit the dead only in this respect, namely, that in commending the dead to the patronage of the martyr the desire for supplicating in his behalf is increased" (cf. *On the Care to be Taken for the Dead* 18.22, FC 27.383; *Retractations* 2.91).

This treatise is not confined to answering the bishop's question. In it, Augustine not only discusses the question of the burial place of the dead and encourages prayer for them, but also discusses other matters, among them the possibility, nature, and forms of visions and dreams (cf. *On the Care to be Taken for the Dead* 10.12). "This short reply of mine," he says, "could have been a sufficient answer to your request, but I call your attention briefly to some other things involved which I think are worthy of discussion here" (*ibid.* 1.3).

It is interesting to note that the shrine of St. Felix of Nola, near which Cynegius was buried, is the one that Augustine suggested to be visited by a priest, Boniface, and an unordained person, Spes, to seek for "a divine decision" after Augustine had tried to reconcile the two men. Both belonged to the monastery at Hippo and had accused each other of some wrongdoing in charges and counter-charges (cf. *Letters* 77 and 78, *ca.* 404, FC 12.373-378). To this memorial of the saint, the people of southern Italy had great devotion because Felix is said to have appeared to them when their town was being attacked.

Chapter 91

ONE BOOK ON THE EIGHT QUESTIONS OF DULCITIUS

(De octo Dulciti quaestionibus liber unus)

The book which I entitled *On the Eight Questions of Dulcitius*[1] should not have been mentioned in this work among my books, for it is composed of passages written by me

1 Cf. *Retr.* 2.91 NOTE.

at an earlier time, except for the fact that a discussion of some import, inserted by me, can be found in it, and also an answer I gave to one of these questions, not taken from any other work of mine, but one which, at the moment, occurred to me.

This book begins as follows: "In my opinion, most beloved son, Dulcitius."

NOTE. The year in which Augustine composed the short treatise, *On the Eight Questions of Dulcitius,* is not generally agreed upon though the assigned date is usually about 422. Some, however, have concluded that it was written about 423 or 425. It is Augustine's reply to questions proposed to him in a letter by the tribune and notary, Dulcitius (cf. *On the Eight Questions of Dulcitius,* Question 1), a brother of the Lawrence whose request for a handbook of Christian teaching resulted in Augustine's composition of *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* (cf. *Retractations* 2.89). As was mentioned above, Dulcitius, the successor of Marcellinus, was responsible for executing, in North Africa, the imperial decrees against the Donatists. It was he who tried to dissuade Gaudentius from carrying out his real or pretended threats of suicide (cf. *Retractations* 2.85 NOTE; *Letter* 204, *ca.* 420).

This work consists of selections from other writings of Augustine, discussions, and an answer to one question not found elsewhere (cf. *Retractations, supra).* Augustine first answers Questions 1-4; then, 6-8. He defers the answer to the "knotty" fifth question until the end. The question and the works from which Augustine drew material for their solution are: Question 1—*On Faith and Works* 14-16 (cf. *Retractations* 2.64), and *On Faith, Hope, and Charity* 18.67-69 (cf. *Retractations* 2.89); Question 2—*The Care to be Taken for the Dead* 1 (cf. *Retractations* 2.90); Question 3—*Letter* 193; Question 4—*Discourse on Psalm* 111 (not in *Retractations);* Question 6— *To Simplician* 2.3 (cf. *Retractations* 2.27); Question 7—*A Reply to Faustus, the Manichaean* 22.33 (cf. *Retractations* 2.33); Question 8—*On the Literal Meaning of Genesis* 1.11-13 (cf. *Retractations* 2.50; cf. also FC 16.428; 438; 443; 447; 450; 453; 460; 461, *The Eight Questions of Dulcitius,* trans. by Mary Deferrari).

When answering the last question to which he replied, namely, Question 5, which is exegetical in character, Augustine did not make use of any work previously written, but based his discussion on Holy Scripture. On the ground that the present work contains selections from his earlier writings,

Augustine does not think it should be called a "book," though in the title of this work as handed down to us in the manuscript tradition of the *Retractations*, the word "book" is used: *De octo Dulciti quaestionibus liber unus.*

Chapter 92

ONE BOOK TO VALENTINE AND THE MONKS WITH HIM, ON GRACE AND FREE CHOICE

(Ad Valentinum et cum illo monachos de gratia et libero arbitrio liber unus)

I wrote a book whose title is *On Grace and Free Choice* because of those persons who, by thinking that free choice is denied when the grace of God is defended,[1] defend free will in such a manner as to deny the grace of God by affirming that it is bestowed according to our merits.[2] I addressed it, however, to those monks of Hadrumetum in whose monastery the controversy on this subject started; as a result, some of them were compelled to consult me.

This book begins as follows: "Because of those persons who . . . the free choice of man."

NOTE. The treatise, *On Grace and Free Choice, to Valentine and the Monks with Him,* and the one placed immediately after it in the *Retractations*, namely, *On Admonition and Grace,* were written about the same time, that is, in 426 or 427. Both are addressed to Valentine, abbot of a monastery in Hadrumetum (modern Sousse in Tunisia) and his monks. They are Augustine's first works against "Semipelagianism," considered a modified form of Pelagianism, which included a denial of the necessity of grace for the beginning and consummation of man's salvation. This system of teaching originated at approximately the same time in two monasteries of the West,

1 Cf. *Letters* 194, 214, 215; *Retr.* 1.8.
2 Cf. *On Grace and Free Choice* 5.10.

one in North Africa at the aforementioned Hadrumetum, the other in southern Gaul at the monastery of St. Victor. It is with the former we are here concerned.

The term "Semipelagianism" was not used in early Christian times and in the Middle Ages. In a letter to Augustine (*Letter* 225), written in 427 or 429, Prosper of Aquitaine refers to this error as "the survivals of the Pelagians" *(reliquiae Pelagianorum).* The designation "Semipelagianism" was first employed during the controversy over Molinism in the sixteenth century to refer to Molina's doctrine of grace, being there used by those opposed to his views on the ground that they showed a similarity to the Pelagian teaching. At a later date, it was applied to the view held by the monks of Hadrumetum and Marseilles and has been so used since that time, though there are objections to the application of the term to their position (cf. Bihlmeyer-Tüchle, *op. cit.* 286-287. See especially: "Semi-Pelagianism," DTC 14.2 1796-1850; also Sr. Alphonsine Lesousky, *De dono perseverantiae.)*

In a letter written to Augustine, Valentine expressed his gratitude for the present treatise and gave the circumstances that brought about the outbreak of a sharp religious controversy in his monastery (cf. *Letter* 216, 426/427 A.D.). During a visit to his native town of Uzala, he writes, Florus, a monk from Hadrumetum, came across a letter written some years before by Augustine to a priest, Sixtus (later Pope Sixtus III [432-440]), in which the writer affirmed the gratuity of God's grace and expressed his views on grace and predestination (cf. *Letter* 194, 418 A.D.). Felix, a monk, dictated this letter to Florus and it was brought to the monastery at Hadrumetum. There, this letter was shown, without the knowledge of Valentine, the abbot, to "untutored brethren" *(Letter* 216). Some of the monks violently opposed Augustine's opinions and eventually "strife arose from the enmity of five brothers or more" (*ibid.*). These, in turn, stirred up other monks. A heated controversy was thus initiated between those who supported Augustine's doctrine and those opposed to it. The resultant division disturbed the peace and harmony of the monastery.

When Valentine became aware of this state of affairs through Florus, he turned first to Evodius of Uzala and then to two priests, Januarius and Sabinus, for counsel (cf. *Letter* 216). But the dissident monks were unconvinced. In a further attempt to settle the controversy, three monks, Crescentius and two who bore the same name, Felix, were sent to Augustine to consult him. When they departed some time later, Augustine gave them the present treatise and two letters *(Letters* 214 and 215, *ca.* 426/427), as well as documents pertaining to the

condemnation of Pelagianism by the Church (cf. *Letter* 215). Apparently, these writings and Augustine's treatise, *On Admonition and Grace* (cf. *Retractations* 2.93) ended the controversy. Later, Valentine, in a letter (*Letter* 216, 426/427 A.D.), states that peace and harmony had been restored to the monastery at Hadrumetum (cf. *Retractations* 2.93).

In this present work, which seems to have been so effective in combatting the erroneous interpretation of Augustine's teachings at the monastery at Hadrumetum, Augustine defends and clarifies his doctrine on grace and free choice of will against the erroneous conclusions of these monks. He shows clearly that, by affirming the gratuity of God's grace and its prevenience to an act of the will, he was not denying the freedom of the will of man. Basing his arguments on the testimony of Holy Scripture, he proves that the will of man is free, that it is prepared by God, and that, without God's grace, which is entirely gratuitous, man cannot bring a good act to accomplishment. As an example of the gratuitousness of the grace of God, he gives the gift of salvation bestowed on infants.

Chapter 93

ONE BOOK TO THE SAME, ON ADMONITION AND GRACE

(Ad quos supra de correptione et gratia liber unus)

A second time, to the same monks, I wrote a second book. I entitled it *On Admonition and Grace* because I had been told that some one there had said that no one should be admonished for not observing the commandments of God, but that prayer alone should be offered for him so that he would observe them.[1]

This book begins as follows: "I have read the letter, dearly beloved brother, Valentine."

When I reviewed these writings of mine, I found that I had composed ninety-three works in two hundred thirty-two

1 Cf. *On Admonition and Grace* 1.1-6.9; *Retr.* 2.92.

books.[2] I did not know up to that time whether I was going to write others and, on the insistence of my brethren, I published this review of them in two books before beginning to reexamine my letters and my sermons to the people, the former dictated, the latter spoken.[3]

NOTE. As mentioned above, the treatise, *On Admonition and Grace,* and the one immediately preceding it in the *Retractations, On Grace and Free Choice,* were written about 426/427, and addressed to the abbot Valentine and his monks of the monastery at Hadrumetum (cf. *Retractations* 2.92 NOTE).

Augustine states that he wrote the present treatise to refute the views of a certain person who asserted that no one should be admonished for his non-observance of the precepts of God; rather, prayer in his behalf should suffice (cf. *Retractations, supra).* This work, then, is a refutation of the contention that the admonitions of a superior for a subject's fall are unnecessary and valueless if, as was wrongly concluded from Augustine's doctrine on the necessity of grace, the accomplishment of good acts is due to grace alone (cf. *On Admonition and Grace* 1.2). This writing was Augustine's final attempt to

2 Cf. *Letter* 216. For some opinions on the character of the *Retractations,* cf.: (1) J. Burnaby, "The 'Retractationes' of Saint Augustine: Self-criticism or Apologia?" *Augustinus Magister* I (Paris [1954] 85-92; (2) L. J. Van der Lof, "Augustin a-t-il changé d'intention pendant la composition des 'Retractations'?" *Augustiniana* 16 (1966) 5-10; (3) B. Altaner, "St. Augustine's Preservation of His Own Writings," *Theological Studies* 9 [1948] 600-603; (4) P. M. Lagrange, "Les Rétractations exégetiques de saint Augustin," *Miscellanea Agostiniana* II (Rome 1931) 373-395; (5) J. de Ghellinck, "Les Rétractations de saint Augustin: Examen de conscience de l'écrivain," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 57 (1930) 481-500.

3 The translation of the last lines is based on the reading established by Knöll in his edition of the *Retractations* in CSEL on the evidence of a critical examination of the manuscript tradition, namely, *antequam epistulas et sermones in populum, alias dictatas alios a me dictos, retractare coepissem.* The Maurist text has *alios dictatos, alios a me dictos,* and would thus mean that Augustine dictated some sermons, but delivered others extemporaneously. For Augustine's method of preparing and delivering his sermons, cf. R. J. Deferrari, "St. Augustine's Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons," *American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922) 97-123, 193-220; C. Mohrmann, *Sint Augustinus Preken voor het Volk* 1 (Utrecht and Brussels 1948), especially pp. xiii-xviii, in part replying to M. Pontet, *L'exégèse de S. Augustin* (Théologie: Etudes publiées sous la direction de la Faculté de Théologie S. J. de Lyon-Fourvière 7; Paris 1944) 3 n. 9, and Prof. Mohrmann's further defense of Knöll's reading in *Vigiliae Christianae* 8 (1954) 123, 124.

end the controversy of the monks at Hadrumetum; apparently, it met with success. It did not make the same impact on the monks of St. Victor in Marseilles in southern Gaul, where the so-called Semipelagian teachings (cf. *Retractations* 2.93 NOTE) were prolonged. Eventually, they extended elsewhere. This error was finally condemned, in 529, at the Second Council of Orange, where twenty-five canons were drawn up against it; the action of this Council was confirmed at Rome the following year. These basic decisions were not only a deathblow to the erroneous doctrines, but also a confirmation of Augustine's teaching on grace.

The greater part of this important treatise is devoted to a discussion of the gift of perseverance. Augustine himself considered it his clearest presentation of this doctrine, as we learn from a later work, *On the Gift of Perseverance* (cf. *De dono perseverantiae* 21.55), in which Augustine says that never, or almost never, at any previous time had he asserted more clearly or expressly than in this work that perseverance to the end is also a gift of God. He adds, however, that this does not mean that no one else had spoken of this gift in a better way prior to this time *(ibid.)*. The treatise of 426/7 concludes with a reaffirmation of the necessity and value of admonitions and a short explanation of God's saving grace.

Two later works of Augustine not included in his *Retractations*, namely, *On the Gift of Perseverance* just referred to, and *On the Predestination of the Saints (De praedestinatione sanctorum*, 429-430), are also of importance because of the part they played in Augustine's struggle against "the remnants of the Pelagian heresy" (cf. *Letter* 225). They were written in response to a report made by Prosper of Aquitaine and a certain Hilary on the heretical teachings of the monks of Marseilles, whose leader was the abbot, John Cassian (cf. *Retractations* 2.91 NOTE).

At the end of the present chapter of the *Retractations*, Augustine comments on the *Retractations* itself. Here, he not only enumerates the number of works and "books" he has examined in it, but also indicates that his plan had been to examine in the same way his sermons and letters as well. Yielding to the pressure of his brethren, however, he had published his *Retractations* in the unfinished form in which it has come down to posterity, lacking as it does his account of two whole classes of his literary production. Hence, we do not know how Augustine would have evaluated his letters, sermons, and the last also of his "books." Cf. *Retractations, supra; Letter* 224, 427/428 A.D., where Augustine discloses his plans for the completion of his *Retractations*.

INDICES

I. INDEX TO THE WRITINGS OF ST. AUGUSTINE

In both its parts this index is intended for readers who are not intimately acquainted with the titles of Augustine's many works. In each part, single titles have been presented more than once if the title contained more than one element that could reasonably be used as a basis for searching; thus, in the English index, *On the Immortality of the Soul* is entered both under "Immortality" and "Soul," and correspondingly in the Latin. Under each entry the reference first given is to the pages that carry the relevant chapter in the *Retractations* and the attached NOTE. Under *Sermons* and (this among the Latin titles only) *Epistulae* the unparenthesized numerals refer to the number of the sermon or letter; the numerals in parenthesis refer to pages.

A. LATIN TITLES

B. English Titles

II. INDEX TO HOLY SCRIPTURE

The numerals outside of parentheses refer to chapter and verse of the biblical book in question; those parenthesized give book and chapter location in the *Retractations*.

NEW TESTAMENT

III. GENERAL INDEX